JDMB IBLIOPHILE

37

January 1986

From the Editor's Grim Grey Typewriter —
Ed Hirshberg 1
Toward the Automated Village —
John D. MacDonald 7
McGee at the Wheel —
Thomas D. Lane 10
The Travis McGee Teasers: Part II —
Jim Neal 19
. . . & Everything —
Len & June Moffat 26
The Shine Section —
Walter & Jean Shine 30
Please Write for Details 41

JDM Bibliophile #37

January, 1986

This is a non-profit amateur journal devoted to the works and readers of John D. MacDonald and related matters. Contents are copyright 1985 by Edgar W. Hirshberg. Authors are assigned all rights to their own material.

Editor: Ed Hirshberg
Department of English
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida 33620

Founders and West Coast Editors:
June and Len Moffat
Box 4456
Downey, California 90241

Contributing Editors:
Jean and Walter Shine
122 Lakeshore Drive, Apt. 1134
N. Palm Beach, Florida 33408

George Corrick
University of North Florida
Jacksonville, Florida 32216

Administrative Assistant: Lucy McLeod

Type-setter: Gerry Greene

Production: Lyndall W. Lee

FROM THE EDITOR'S GRIM GREY TYPEWRITER . . .

By Ed Hirshberg

ANNIVERSARY BLUES

We neglected to mention in the last issue--#36, for July--that it commemorated the 20th anniversary of the founding of the JDMB back in 1965, and for this oversight we apologize. The founders were Len Moffatt and June Konigsberg--who later becomes June Moffatt--and JDMB #1, which we regrettably do not have a copy of, was described by Len as a dittographed sheet listing all of JDM's novels as of March, 1965, in chronological order by publication dates. The list, reprinted in JDMB #2, included 55 items, of which one was an anthology of mystery stories written by women, THE LETHAL SEX, one was the story of John and Dorothy MacDonald's life

with their cats, THE HOUSEGUESTS, and four were different titles of the same two books, WINE OF THE DREAMERS, reprinted as PLANET OF THE DREAMERS, and YOU LIVE ONCE, reissued as YOU KILL ME. This leaves, if our math is correct, 51 full-length novels--which, considering the fact that JDM had been writing seriously for only twenty years, indicates an extraordinary level of productivity of high-level fiction, particularly if you add the numerous short stories he was writing at the same time. Which is sort of off the subject of JDMB's 20th Anniversary, but still. . . . Anyway, we'll try to be more careful about the 25th.

FUTURE PLANS

By JDMB's 25th, all going well, JDM will have completed the following books that are presently on his writing agenda: "Barrier Island," scheduled for publication this Spring by Alfred Knopf, is, as JDM describes it in a recent interview piece by Jim Lewis in the Rocky Mountain NEWS, kindly forwarded to us by Valerie McCaffery, "sort of a land scam thing up in the northern part of the Gulf of Mexico, Alabama, Louisiana and Pensacola-type coast." In the Fall of this year "When You and Me and McGee Were Young" is due; it is non-fiction, a collection of letters to and from JDM and comedian Dan Rowan, written between 1967 and 1974, "from just before 'Laugh-In' to when it really got going." The next McGee book, #22, is scheduled for the Spring of 1987. Another non-McGee, not yet titled, will be out the following Fall, and McGee #23 will be published in the Spring of 1988. Not what you would call the plans of an idle man, and indicating that, though he is pushing his late, late sixties, JDM is suffering no diminution of his powers.

On top of all this, scheduled for November, 1988, is the second JDM Conference on Mystery and Detection, to be held on the campus of the University of South Florida. At the first one, in 1978, JDM said he'd participate in another in ten years--and a lot of those years have flown by. Details on the next Conference will be forthcoming in a future issue of JDMB.

"JOHN D. MacDONALD: A TRUE BIBLIOPHILE"

That's the title of the newest contribution to JDM scholarship by that inveterate pair of MacDonaldphiles, Walter and Jean Shine. Readers have deluged Your Ed. with adulatory comments, and here's a selective but not exhaustive sampling:

From BETTY R. BAILEY of Sanibel, Florida: This collection of JDM's statements, views, reviews and wisdom serves to elaborate and stress JDM's philosophy of the importance of reading, which, he says, "is a personal involvement. . . . a creative effort wherein the imagination adds all the environmental details the author must skip. . . ." If you would know JDM better, by all means read JDM: A TRUE BIBLIOPHILE and be treated to an unforgettable look at his feelings about reading and his reviews of books by other authors, compiled in the usual style of perfection of the Shines' work.

From ROBERT GARY: It's a gem. GEM: An object of rare beauty and worth; the choicest part, greatly prized, a "treasure". An apt description out of my old Oxford Dictionary for this compilation of JDM's philosophy and sage comments on the art and joy of reading books. I took it to bed with me and, of course, couldn't go to sleep till I'd finished. . . . An actress friend (who could play Lisa Dean) put it best when she told me: "JDM's got me spoiled. None of the others satisfy me any more." True, he's a hard act to follow, but now the suspense is over. We have a solution of sorts in this booklet, with JDM's succinct and pungent comments by way of his reviews of his favorite--and not so favorite--authors and their books to guide us. I feel better now, having enough good reading to last till Christmas, 2000, or until the man himself produces his next. I advise my fellow readers to get their hands on JDM: A TRUE BIBLIOPHILE--you too can be saved.

From JAMES L. DENNIS of Walnut Creek, Cal.: Recently I got my hands on JDM: A TRUE BIBLIOPHILE. As an ancient fan of JDM,I give this work 4 1/2 stars, not to be missed by anyone who enjoys the writing of JDM. The trouble is that I don't know whether I'll ever have the time to read all the writings that JDM comments on, but I'll try.

From TOM EMMENS of Eugene, Ore.: For collectors, it is a must-have and for the general (or newer) fan it's an introduction to JDM's broad attention to his craft, or art.

From CARMEN RUSSELL HURFF, Curator of the MacDonald Archive at the University of Florida Library in Gainesville: I was already familiar with many of the views and reviews cited by the Shines, but it is a delight to see them well organized and made available to other JDM aficionadoes in JDM: A TRUE BIBLIOPHILE. JDM's incisive literary criticism and commentary is a pleasure to read on its own; it is furthermore a very useful guide to book selection. I have personally followed Mr. MacDonald's judgments many times now, and thereby discovered several authors I might have missed: Robert B. Parker, Loren Estleman, Arthur Lyons and Elmore Leonard, among others. When one has exhausted the JDM canon, it is a fine thing to have excellent advice upon where to turn next. Thank you, Shines, and thank you JDM.

From RICHARD M. LEADER of Bartlesville, OK.: Here is a strong compilation that really lets the reader see inside JDM's fertile brain and considerate heart through his review of hundreds of books. Over and above all that, this work should gain wide recognition among teachers, librarians and writers at all levels of professionalism. The Shines are to be congratulated for this fine, useful effort.

From ALAN WEISSMAN, of Brooklyn, N.Y.: The Shines continue to shine. Many thanks, Jean and Walter, for your fascinating compendium, JDM: A TRUE BIBLIOPHILE. I've always thought of JDM as, among other things, a great chronicler of, and commentator on, life in post-World War II America. The Shines' book shows he is also a wonderful commentator on the writing of the period, and, as the fullness of their pictures shows, a far

from insignificant literary and cultural critic. I recommend this compilation--a selection made with taste and intelligence--to all JDMB readers. It's well worth the modest price they're asking.

--It's $4, and Your Ed. agrees it's a great buy. For details on how you can obtain your copy of JDM: A TRUE BIBLIOPHILE, see the modest and tasteful unpaid ad at the end of this issue's Shine Section.

MacDONALD MANIA: OTHER MATTERS

Speaking of reading, JDM's list for last summer appeared in the Florida Endowment for the Humanities NEWSLETTER as the following: THE MARCH OF FOLLY, by Barbara Touchman, John Updike's collection of criticism, HUGGING THE SHORE, William Kennedy's IRONWEED, David Hersh's THE MATHEMATICAL EXPERIENCE and Emmet Tyrell's THE LIBERAL CRACKUP. . . . Also last summer, JDM wrote a Letter to the Editor of the Sarasota HERALD-TRIBUNE about the "wretched idea" of building a high-speed train line across Florida. As another addition to Florida's "unbelievably slow, badly designed and savagely expensive" transportation construction, it would greatly increase the carnage of animals already grievously endangered by motor traffic, and would cost much more money than its doubtful benefits would be worth. . . . And in the November, 1985, issue of NATIONAL LAMPOON, JDM had a very brief but bitter indictment of how TV news crews handle moments of extreme grief in the lives of the people who are unfortunate enough to have such horrible things happen to them that they become newsworthy. He is becoming "increasingly furious at the trend in local and national news for more and more invasions of the privacy of grief, and the jackass questions the young Airedales use to prime the tear ducts," such as "Mrs. Brown, what was your reaction to the death of your newborn quintuplets?" or "Miss Green, what was your thinking when they arrested your brother for the murder of his wife?" Grief, claims JDM, is one of our strongest emotions, "personal, private and wrenchingly solitary," and to move into "this area of the human heart with jaunty boob questions is damned bad manners and damned tacky television," indicating the "gross callousness of both the questioner and the person aiming the camera." Amen to that--we've been amazed and embarrassed at many of these TV excesses, and agree with JDM that if something like that ever happens to us we should give these obstreperous newshounds "some striking shots of the backs of our mourning heads, and no words at all." . . . . And in case some of you didn't notice, the October REDBOOK magazine ran one of JDM's early short stories, "The Fatal Flaw." It appeared first back in February, 1949, as "Killers' Nest" in DETECTIVE TALES, and was reprinted in JDM's MORE GOOD OLD STUFF, published in 1984 by Knopf, under the title JDM originally gave it, "Neighborly Interest," so you can take your choice about what to call it. Under any name it's a pretty good yarn, about a group of kidnappers who make a small mistake, and it stands up to the test of time without any trouble--something which many of us think most of JDM's fiction will have no trouble doing as well. . . . As an example of just how highly his work is regarded, the National Endowment for the Humanities chose A TAN AND SANDY SILENCE as one of five books to discuss on a recent TV series on What America Reads, in the Fort Lauderdale area,

where Travis McGee makes his home in "The Busted Flush" moored at Bahia Mar. There was an exhibit of Travis McGee artifacts at the Main Library and the Shines were on hand for the gala opening. Local authors and scholars lectured on Travis and his peculiarities, and though JDM couldn't make it personally to Fort Lauderdale he taped an interview in Sarasota that was aired all over south Florida. And so JDM and Travis McGee are getting some of the attention they deserve--concerning which JDM remarked that, though he was pleased, he does not expect Travis' character or behavior to change because the National Endowment or some literary scholars are examining him a little more closely. This should be a relief to those of us who might worry that all the belated adulation might be going to Travis's head.

KUDOS FROM THE ARMY

No less a medium than THE STARS AND STRIPES, official newspaper for the U.S. Armed Forces, carried a favorable notice about JDMB in its September 16, 1985, issue, in an article about Fanzines. It arrived courtesy of WARNER GLAUBITZ, APO New York, and a couple of other thoughtful subscribers. We blushed at the following encomium which we are not, however, too modest to reprint in full:

> JDMB is an impressive, twice-yearly magazine for JDM's legion of fans. Each 30-page issue (That should be 40 to 50 page--Ed.) contains a wealth of information about MacDonald and McGee, well written and attractively packaged. JDM himself comments that "it helps me keep in touch with reality. When it comes out, I read it with a sense of disassociation. It is all about somebody I do not know. He is, apparently, a writer. A strange chap, remote and somewhat cold. Were I forced to go about the world being him, I would end up losing touch with myself. So the publication serves me in a way I would never have anticipated: It encourages schizophrenia, and keeps me from going about imitating myself."

Your Ed. did not have anything to do with eliciting this statement from JDM, but we're glad he made it; since JDMB's address was supplied, the item precipated a flood of new subscriptions from members of our Armed Forces throughout the world, making Your Ed. very happy indeed.

COMING OUT PARTY

In celebration of the coming out of Your Ed.'s Twayne U.S. Authors Series biography of JDM, his long-suffering wife and daughter threw a party which we wish all you JDMBers could have attended, since the following items were served, in addition to various types of liquid refreshments: "The Green Dipper," "The Thick Red Lox," "The Right Orange for the Crowd," "Scarlet Juice," "A Tan and Sandwichy Silence," "One Cheerful Yellow Pie," and "The Brass Cupcake(s)." We hope this menu has a familiar ring--and that you'll suggest other items for future parties as the spirit moves (spirits move?) you. To supply some indication of the spirit

behind this party, we give you the following poem, written by that master of the Limerick form, Professor Don Harkness of the University of South Florida's Department of American Studies:

A long tawny silence for Ed
Is completed, as from its deep bed,
His biographee
Of Travis McGee
Rises up, with its bright orange head.

Your Ed. was humbled, as we are sure you will be, by this the effusion of sheer genius.

And finally, still on The Book, approximately two dozen of you took us up on the offer we made in the last issue of JDMB, to autograph--and get JDM to autograph--your copies of the hardback edition. The offer is still on, though we can't get you JDM's autograph until April, since he'll be on one of his world cruises until then. The procedure is to order the book directly from Twayne Publishers, c/o G.K. Hall, 70 Lincoln Street, Boston, MA 02111, enclosing a check for $14.95 made out to Twayne; after you receive your copy from G.K. Hall, send it on to Your Ed. at the JDMB. In due course you will get it back, with autographs. However, if you don't want to go through all that trouble you can buy a paperback copy at your bookstore--where the hardback is not on sale--when it comes out sometime this Spring, at around $8, considerably less than the hardback edition. Your Ed. will not be able to handle the autograph deal in the paperback edition because too many copies--we hope--will be involved.

TOWARD THE AUTOMATED VILLAGE

By John D. MacDonald

(This piece originally appeared on the Editorial page of the Sarasota Journal on September 1, 1971.)

The most urgent problems confronting the Sarasota-Manatee area are reflections of the most subtle and savage problems facing Western Civilization.

Nothing can be more merciless and inevitable than a technology in transition.

Cities are nearing the end of their special cycle, becoming obsolete because the reasons for their existence are vastly diminished. Cities were once fortresses, defense areas against natural disaster as well as armed invaders. Workers had to live close to jobs. In days when population was less transient, the idea of identification with a home-place extended outside the four walls to include the street and the neighborhood. Prior to cubistic architectural blandness, buildings, streets and neighborhoods were unique, so that there was a sense of "being home" when one entered his own neighborhood, of being protected and identified.

In a world of constant movement and constant sameness, everything outside four walls is a dangerous, hostile and indifferent environment.

Cities have become grossly inefficient because, to survive, they have had to invite "outsiders" in, beguiling them with great arterial rivers of concrete flowing into the heart of the city, bringing these exurbanites in to shop, to work, to play. Businesses and residents within the cities are crushed under the weight of the ad valorem taxes necessary to provide city services plus the beguilments necessary to enhance a dubious survival.

Urban renewal projects to "revitalize" cities are bandaids for incurable lesions because the need for cities no longer exists. They perform no valid functions.

At the same time as our cities have been strangling in strands of concrete, we perceive the end of the Great Era of the Automobile. We move backward toward a village culture. (Or forward?)

Examine the clues which show us the shape of the future.

Standardization of highways, motels, foods, regional accents, has made recreational travel a very expensive drudgery. Large corporations have decentralized to an increasing degree, emphasising a "walk to work" handiness in their new rural locations. Bike paths proliferate. Columbia, Maryland, a planned city, is actually a group of villages separated by green belts, each village anchored to a large shopping plaza, all of it planned so all children can reach school on foot without crossing roads, and many adults can walk to work as well.

All aspects of vehicular transportation are becoming grotesquely expensive. Insurance costs are phasing out the high performance car and the younger car owner. Twenty years ago a young couple with small children in a suburban area would frequently employ a sitter and get in the car and drive into the city to attend a concert, go to a movie, go to dinner and a night club. Today the total costs can run up to fifty dollars, and there is the added irritation of wondering if your parked car will be plundered, or if you will be mugged while trying to reach it.

Our aged residents, facing not only the great cost of car operation, but also the danger of taking slowed reflexes into hard-nosed traffic, seek living quarters where they can reach nearby shopping areas on foot or by trike.

We are rapidly approaching that time when we cease moving about, and will have an image of the world brought to us. Already there is far too much standardized in-put available--such a clatter and din of strident and trivial news, puffed into Macy-parade dragons, that we have learned to close it out. Emotionally we are turning inward, into a village culture posture, where what happens two streets away is more significant and memorable than politicians making world tours. Standardization of input will disappear, and one of the last reasons for leaving the village will disappear when selective cassette television becomes available over community cable, and the resident of every village can be entertained or instructed, according to whichever cassette he selects from the available library.

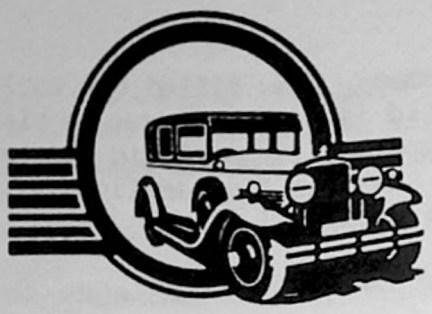
If we could all see to what extent the style and pattern of life are changing, inevitably, day by day, we could then relegate all the tub-thumping about new highways, new arterials, bigger and better airports, revitalization of urban areas, to a proper place in the order of things, as the spasms and harsh cries of a dying way of life.

As during many times of transition in the past, the young people are the first to sense the new directions. Consume less. Breed less. Become more sensitive to others. Share possessions. Live in tribal villages. They say to us, "You have taught competitiveness, aggression,

achievement, material success. You filled the world with achievers and achievement, and the world is sick, the sea is sick, the sky and earth are sick. So let's give up your linear logic and technology which kills three things to save one. Let us live emotionally, mystically, in love and truth, respecting one another."

Didn't the world used to be that way?

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is one of a series of guest commentaries written by community leaders at the invitation of The Sarasota Journal in the hope of further stimulating thought about community problems and understanding of community assets. The guest writers have chosen their own subjects. The opinions they express also are their own, and the Sarasota Journal does not necessarily agree or disagree with them.



McGEE AT THE WHEEL

by Thomas D. Lane

(Tom Lane is an English professor at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, and is a long-standing JDM enthusiast.)

In the Travis McGee series, John D. MacDonald reveals an almost amazing variety of attitudes and opinions about modern life. We see all these, of course, through the eyes of the narrator Travis McGee. One aspect of modern life which appears in all twenty-one of the novels in the series is the automobile and the attendant problems and few pleasures it brings to twentieth century man. Automobiles, from the vintage Rolls Royce pickup Miss Agnes to the lowliest taxi and tour bus, are prominent in the series.

Like most detective heroes, Travis McGee is eccentric. His life-style--taking his retirement in chunks, living on a houseboat, etc.--is capped off by the car he drives, a 1936 electric blue Rolls Royce pickup which he has named Miss Agnes. The origin of this marvelous vehicle appears most clearly in the first novel in the series, The Deep Blue Good-By (1964):

> I believe she is the only Rolls Royce in America which has been converted into a pickup truck. She is vintage 1936, and apparently some previous owner had some unlikely disaster happen to the upper half of her rear end and solved the problem in an implausible way. She is one of the big ones, and in spite of her brutal surgery retains the family knack of going eighty miles an hour all day long in a kind of ghastly silence. Some other idiot had her repainted a horrid electric blue. When I found her squatting, shame-faced, in the back row of a gigantic car lot, I bought her at once and named her after a teacher I had in the fourth grade whose hair was that same shade of blue.

In A Deadly Shade of Gold (1966), McGee retells this story and adds: "Miss Agnes was born into a depression and suffered therefrom." He also tells us he named her Miss Agnes "with an attack of the quaints." He keeps her in a garage that he can bicycle to from the Busted Flush, "sheltered from brine and sun. She needs tender loving care in her declining years." Miss Agnes has a distinct personality. She was "squatting shame-faced" when McGee first saw her, Nora Gardino

(in Gold) is afraid Miss Agnes will sulk if she and McGee drive another car, and she seems "glad" to take Travis away from a college campus which has "snitty little clots of sports cars and Detroit imitations thereof."

In Lavender (1970) Miss Agnes is wrecked in the opening scene of the novel. McGee swerves to miss a girl running across the highway and he and Meyer and Miss Agnes end up in a canal. A young mechanic named Ron Hatch repairs Miss Agnes on his own time because he can't bear to see her sit there and suffer. His work is approved by McGee because he uses no fillers in the bodywork, but Travis rejects the yellow paint job with gold flake that Ron wants to put on her. Miss Agnes must stay blue "for sentimental reasons."

Even though Miss Agnes seems to be repaired and in good order by the end of Lavender, we learn later in Turquoise (1972) that extensive changes have been made in her.

> Ever since I had dumped her into a drainage canal to avoid hitting a fleet-footed girl in the night, I had been upgrading all the hidden parts. Now she had the big engine lifted out of a 1972 Mark IV Continental that was totaled. Rebuilding the engine with both stock and custom power assists had meant a new gear train and a new rear end. Then she had more power than the suspension and the brakes could handle. So we installed a suspension out of the biggest Dodge pickup, along with power disc brakes all the way around. Of course I had to change to a twelve-volt system, and put in two heavy duty batteries and a heavy-duty alternator. After several weird improvisations, we rigged a power steering system that worked well enough. There was enough extra horsepower to borrow some to run a really efficient air-conditioning system.

McGee seems torn by this transformation of his ancient car. He misses many of the little intricacies Miss Agnes used to have (an adjustable suspension, a pre-starting oil heater, a carburetor adjustable for altitude, and a clock that "wound up with a key and kept time") but he says that he either had to update her performance or get rid of her. "Any true aficionado of the Rolls would have taken one look inside the hood and run off to throw up. Sometimes I want to," he tells us. He also says, "I still feel like apologizing to her for the total organ transplant."

McGee has told us in Yellow (1966) that he is "no sports car buff. But I enjoy any piece of equipment made to highest standards of performance, without that kind of adornment Meyer calls Detroit Baroque." After Miss Agnes is transformed to a high-performance machine, he relates this account of his driving:

> I must confess to getting a certain childish pleasure out of driving her when she is challenged. I was heading up I-75 well north of Gainesville one bright afternoon at the legal seventy, on an unusually empty hunk of highway, when three hulking

youths in a yellow 'Bird appeared in the rearview moving up fast. They slowed while passing and held even, looking at old Miss Agnes, a horrid blue, corrupted by the makeshift pickup bed. They seemed to be marveling that she could push that upright windshield through the air at seventy. They were crowing with idiot laughter. They made finger gestures and sped on, back up to ninety perhaps. I gave them a couple of miles, then floored Miss Agnes. The new needle was motionless against the top when I blew by them at one forty plus. They made a try, but kept dropping back and back until they were gone. I nearly overshot my exit. I apologized to the old lady for the extra exertion. I wonder if they ever tell the story. Who would believe them?

In The Green Ripper (1979), McGee says the new motor is too much for Miss Agnes, that she is yanked along "too fast for her antique dignity, like a dowager blown into an unwilling trot by a gale-force wind."

Other folks have driven Miss Agnes. In Silver (1985), we learn that Travis sometimes loans her to Sam Dandie because Sam's visiting "nieces" like her. And of course Meyer drives Miss Agnes on occasion, but Meyer says, "When I drive that thing, I always feel as if I'm hurrying to catch up with the antique car parade" (Crimson).

In several of the novels McGee contemplates getting rid of Miss Agnes, but as he says in Turquoise he can't abide being "trapped in semifoetal position in some squatty little pastel capsule with my tail-bone eight inches from the macadam." He refuses to sell Miss Agnes to Sam Dandie in Silver (his comment is "No way"), so right now he still owns her and one may assume he will continue to do so.

Partly because McGee travels a good bit on his salvage adventures but largely too because Miss Agnes is too "conspicuous and memorable," he depends on rental cars and borrowed cars to suit the occasion. He has borrowed everything from "a battered old white Chevy pickup with big noisy beach-buggy tires and a Florida tag so old you could just about make out the green number on white from three feet away" (Silver) as part of a red-neck fisherman disguise to a Mercedes station wagon for picking up Meyer at the airport on the latter's return from Canada (Cinnamon).

McGee seems to have no end of trouble renting cars. This may be somewhat understandable in Grenada or in remote parts of Mexico. But even in the U.S.A. he frequently has to settle for something less than the industry standard. Even in the latest novel, with $50,000 in cash on hand for buying drugs, McGee has to rent a Renault 12 without air-conditioning. He spends a lot of time complaining of the heat, and he and Browder have to stop in order to talk to each other. In earlier novels, the same problems occur. In Cinnamon Skin the "little tin car" he and Meyer are using in upstate New York is chased by a souped-up Bronco. Their rental has a top speed of 72 MPH on level ground. Only McGee's stuntman driving saves them. The mad musician chasing them is

killed when he wrecks the Bronco and it rolls over him. Also in Cinnamon McGee rents an air-conditioned car in Mexico, but it is a three-year old pink Plymouth and the air-conditioner is so loud it makes conversation impossible. In Lemon he rents a yellow Gremlin without air-conditioning, and he has to test it to see if he can even get his knees under the steering wheel. It is so hot he describes it once as a "bright little oven" and another time he says it is "hot enough to bake glaze on pottery."

In Purple McGee rents a sand-colored Falcon, inspects it by walking around it, and finds a "deep dent in the back right fender." After it has been noted on his rental contract, he tells us:

> One can never blame them for trying. The ones who bang them up run past the desk, toss the keys in, and go get on an airplane. I inspect cars I rent. I add up the tabs waiters hand me. I read the fine print on contracts. In these matters, I am a little old lady.

Another Falcon he rents (in Indigo) is in such bad shape McGee takes it directly to the nearest Ford dealership for repairs, but he does not tell us who will pay the repair bill.

Although McGee does occasionally rent cars that seem to suit him, more often than not he is dissatisfied. Since he has told us that he always flies first class because it is nicer and it suits him to do so, one wonders why he does not demand more out of ground transportation.

In Nightmare in Pink, McGee actually steals a car. He has been drugged and confined in a private hospital, where he manages to put vials of hallucinogenic drugs in the hospital coffee pot. In the awful confusion that follows, he raps an unidentified man on the head with a length of pipe, takes his car keys and steals the man's "big" car in order to make good his escape. He drives into New York City, still suffering from the effects of the drugs.

> I took his car and drove away from there. Fifteen minutes later I was on the Thruway, heading south toward the city. Twenty minutes later the sides of the highway began to curl upward and turn pink and the musical sound began again. I had to pull off. It took twenty minutes to get from my lane to the shoulder. The car was barely moving. But when it reached the shoulder it began to leap up and down. I stopped it short of a tree and lay down with my arms wrapped around my head. My own face was melting off. I could feel it. I could hear it drip onto the seat upholstery.
>
> Several months later the world resolidified and I drove on.

Incidentally, Meyer (in Cinnamon Skin) is also guilty of driving under the influence after drinking with Helen June to open her up about her brother, Cody T. W. Pittler. Meyer complains this way:

> I drove back here with one eye shut so there would be one center line instead of two, one pair of oncoming headlights instead of two. It is a criminal act to drive in such a condition. I could have killed innocent people. I feel very sad and soiled and old.

Cars and driving help to form and shape the plots of many of the McGee novels, though certainly not to the extent that horses and horse racing inform the Dick Francis novels. These incidents in McGee are more like plot devices and philosophical examples. Good guys and bad guys are killed in car wrecks. We learn in Turquoise that Joe Delladio, his wife, and two of their four children have been killed in a head-on collision in Mexico by a bus with busted brakes. In the same novel, a McGee acquaintance borrows a Dodge Charger at Christmas time and rams it into a tree at 120+ MPH, with no skid marks. In Indigo, the plot revolves around a fatal one-car accident in Mexico which is thought to have killed Bix Bowie, the daughter of McGee's "client" T. Harlan Bowie, who has himself been paralyzed from the neck down in an automobile accident. Mr. Bowie was hit by a tractor-trailer rig whose driver lost control in the wind of a thunderstorm and came across the median. Oddly enough, the rescuers may have injured Bowie while getting him out of his squashed Buick with prybars and cutting torches.

In Free Fall In Crimson, two local teenagers who have been marginally involved in the plot are killed in a car crash, causing the townspeople to attack the movie set and also causing McGee's miraculous final balloon flight. Balloon travel seems safer than the open road in these novels.

In Darker Than Amber, Vangie, whose life McGee has saved once under a bridge at Marathon, is killed by being pushed in front of a speeding car. This is murder made to look like an accident. McGee knows that Vangie's mother had been killed when she was hit by a truck. In The Dreadful Lemon Sky, Carrie Milligan is murdered in a similar manner. She is pushed into the path of a truck from behind her own car, but the ever-alert eyes of McGee and Meyer show them that it was not the accident it was made to appear. In The Quick Red Fox, McGee figures out a plausible rebuttal to a murderer's alibi by calculating the driving time from a point in California to Phoenix in a "good fast car" with "enough muscle under the hood, and the right kind of springing for the mountain curves." In Yellow he tracks someone down by figuring out bus schedules and probable routes. In Lavender, he finds a body in his rental convertible. His female companion says, "You shouldn't have left [the top] down anyway, dear." In The Empty Copper Sea Nicky Noyes is removed from the plot when he, running from McGee and reacting to his drug-induced behavior, runs into a busy street and is cut down by a white Cadillac. McGee and Meyer administer CPR to the driver of the Cadillac, who hits a tree and suffers a heart attack.

As every serious fan of Travis McGee knows, he frequently delivers asides on many subjects, and many of these are related to automobiles and driving. In Silver he ruminates on the many reasons why innocent

people die. One of these reasons is "fog on the interstates." And in Turquoise, one of the ways "They" get you is a "truck driver on uppers."

In the first McGee novel, Blue, he complains of the appearance of Florida highways.

> I went north on the mainland route, past an endless wink and sputter of neon, through the perpetual leaf-fall and forest floor of asphalt, cellophane, candy wrappers, Kleenex, filter tips, ticket halves, Pliofilm and latex.

In Copper he complains that "every square foot of the state except the state parks is going to be found and asphalted and painted with yellow parking lines." McGee the environmentalist constantly notices what cars are doing to our surroundings. In many of the novels he mentions that he can hear traffic noises from the Busted Flush and can smell their hydrocarbon leavings. He comments on the "smutch of too many cars" (Turquoise), the "tiny churchgoing automobiles . . . making a whiskey haze that spoiled the quality of the light" (Turquoise), "the residual stink of the rush-hour traffic" (Scarlet), and the "stars, faint through the particulate matter which jams the air of the gold coast night and day, never dropping below twenty thousand particles per cubic centimeter, except when a hurricane sweeps it away briefly, blowing it all into somebody else's sky" (Copper).

At one point in Pale Gray For Guilt, McGee seems fed up with the whole business of cars and roads and driving.

> People hate their cars. Daddy doesn't come proudly home with the new one any more, and the family doesn't come racing out, yelling WOW, and the neighbors don't come over to admire it. They all look alike, for one thing. So you have to wedge a piece of bright trash atop the aerial to find your own. They may be named after predators, or primitive emotions, or astronomical objects, but in essence they are a big shiny sink down which the money swirls--in insurance, car payments, tags, tolls, tires, repairs. They give you a chance to sit in helpless rage, beating on the steering wheel in a blare of horns while, a mile away, your flight leaves the airport. They give you a good chance of dying quick, and a better chance of agony of torn flesh, smashed guts and splintered bones. Take it to your kindly dealer, and the service people look right through you until you grab one by the arm, and then he says: Come back a week from Tuesday. Make an appointment. Their billions of tons of excreted pollutants wither the leaves on the trees and sicken the livestock. We hate our cars, Detroit. Those of us who can possibly get along without them do so very happily. For those who can't, if there were an alternate choice, they'd grab it in a minute. We buy them reluctantly and try to make them last, and they are not friendly machines anymore. They are expensive, murderous junk, and they manage to look glassily contemptuous of the people who own them. A car is something

that makes you whomp your youngest kid and then feel ashamed of yourself.

After delivering this speech, McGee reveals that he has purchased the Munequita, his runabout speedboat, to use for errands in Ft. Lauderdale, and he resolves to drive as little as possible.

McGee attacks Detroit (where a lot of cars used to come from) many times, but he also has time for road-builders:

> Florida is full of long-range, unending road jobs that break the backs, pocketbooks and hearts of the roadside business. The primitive, inefficient, childlike Mexicans somehow manage to survey, engineer and complete eighty miles of high-speed divided highway through raw mountains and across raging torrents in six months. But the big highway contractors in Florida take a year and a half turning fifteen miles of two-lane road across absolutely flat country into four-lane divided highway.
>
> The difference is in American know-how. (Gray)

McGee himself is apparently a good driver. He uses movie stuntman tactics (in the desert, at night, with no lights) in Purple and also drives like a pro in Cinnamon when he and Meyer are being chased by the souped-up Bronco. And he would not have gone into the canal with Miss Agnes in Lavender had a tire not blown during the skid caused by attempting to miss the girl who ran across the road. Meyer tells us, however, that McGee goes ten miles per hour faster when he is annoyed (Crimson). McGee prefers the back roads to the interstates when he has a choice, and better yet he prefers no roads at all. In Silver he tells us this:

> I took the Munequita outside and ran north up the coast at close to forty knots, promising myself as I have so many times before that the only sane way to get from Lauderdale to Miami and back is by water, and I would never drive again.

McGee does recognize and admire driving skill in others. In Cinnamon Skin, Meyer earns praise for having learned to handle the freeway system in Houston in what McGee calls "very nervous traffic." "You did good," McGee tells Meyer. When McGee flies to Chicago to help out Glory Doyle in Yellow, he tells us about her driving and her Mercedes 230SL:

> Glory and the car were beautifully matched. They were both small, whippy, and well-made, and seemed to understand each other. There was that good feel of road-hunger, of the car that wants to reach and gobble more than you let it. We sped north on the Tri-State, and she had that special sense of rhythm of the expert. It is a matter of having the kind of eye which sees everything happening ahead, linked to a computer which estimates what the varying rates of speed will do to the changing pattern by the time you get there. The expert driver never gives you any feeling of tension or strain in heavy

> traffic, nor startles other drivers. It is a floating, drifting feeling, where by the use of the smallest increments and reductions in pedal pressure, and by the most gradual possible changes in direction, the car fits into gaps, flows through them, slides into the lane which will move most swiftly. She sat as tall as she could, chin high, hands at ten after ten, and made no attempt at chatter until the stampede had thinned. . . . On some of the curves of her shortcuts she showed off a little, but not enough to break the rear end loose. She knew the route through the curves and laid the little car on the rails through each one, steady as statues.

We then learn from Glory Doyle that her late husband had given her the car and a driving course from a professional race car driver.

In Gold, Connie Melgar drives a Mercedes 300SL "with great dash and competence." And in Lemon, McGee approves of the driving abilities of Harry Max Scorf, a policeman.

> I had expected Scorf to sit bolt upright behind the wheel of the dark blue unmarked Cougar and fumble along at a stilted thirty-five. Instead, after he had belted himself in, he tipped his white hat forward to his eyebrows, lounged back into the corner of the driver's seat, put his fingertips on the wheel, and slid through heavy traffic like an oiled eel. He moved to where the holes were, moving the oncoming traffic over, and was able to avoid accelerations, decelerations, and the use of the brakes. He had looked too underprivileged to be an expert, but he was, indubitably. And I said so.

Scorf reveals that he was a stock car driver and goes on to offer McGee advice on choosing traffic lanes, at which he says McGee is not adept.

In Turgoise, Pidge Brindle seems to have taken lessons from Harry Max Scorf:

> She sat very erect behind the wheel, with firm grip and frown of concentration. She angled the little car through holes just before they started to close. She whipped around the indecisive and tucked herself away from the certifiable maniacs. She picked productive lanes and managed to locate, without hesitation, the last parking slot in the lot off Seaside.

McGee is, and has always been, critical of bad drivers. In the first McGee novel he tells George Brell twice that he is driving too fast, and in the most recent novel he is very critical of Scott Browder's driving, so much so that Browder finally lets McGee drive. When Browder is killed later in the book by a knife in the back, McGee says that he would have given seven to three odds that Browder would die in a car wreck of his own making. A Purple Place for Dying opens with McGee criticizing Mona Yoeman's driving, and once (in Lavender) McGee even snarls at Meyer's driving, but it is because McGee just got out of the hospital after having almost been killed by King Sturnevan. He criti-

cizes many unnamed drivers, calling them maniacs and fools because of their behavior on freeways and their driving habits in bad weather. In The Green Ripper he even criticizes hitchhikers and offers advice on the proper way to hitch a ride.

This essay cannot end without at least a mention of the only other car, besides Miss Agnes, McGee is known to have owned. Like most males in the mid-twentieth century, he apparently grew up with a fascination for the automobile. During "the year before [he] was going to be old enough to get a permit to drive," McGee tells us in Yellow, he bought an "old yellow Packard phaeton with the Canada goose on the radiator and the wire wheels." For this first car, he paid "sixteen dollars, a single-shot .22, and a block of Lindbergh airmail stamps." Perhaps both the frustrations and satisfactions of automobile ownership are summed up in McGee's memories of this wonderful but ill-fated vehicle. He delivers a marvelous account of parental disapproval, mechanical frustration, and eventual success. He drove the car for his driver's test and "She and I went humming through many nights on the small back roads, taking the curves and grades in perfect harmony. . . ." It is interesting to note that this Packard quickly develops a personality, just as Miss Agnes is later to do. We learn later in the novel that McGee loaned the Packard to a friend named Buzzy. The car ended up in an almost dry creek bed, damaged beyond repair. It disappeared completely when the snow melted the next spring.

According to Travis McGee, it is possible that all of this business of cars and highways is a mistake in the first place. In Orange he makes a prediction:

> In some remote year the historicans will record that Twentieth Century America attempted the astonishing blunder of changing its culture to fit automobiles instead of people, putting a skin of concrete and asphalt over millions of acres of arable land, rotting the hearts of their cities, so encouraging the proliferation of murderous, high-speed junk that when finally the invention of the Transporlon rendered the auto obsolete, it took twenty years and half a trillion dollars to obliterate the ugliness of all the years of madness, and rebuild the supercities in a manner to dignify the human instead of his toys.

* * * * *

THE TRAVIS McGEE TEASERS: PART II

by Jim Neal

(This is Part II of Jim Neal's ingenious pursuit of JDM's esoteric references to sometimes mythical matters. Jim is a newspaperman now living in San Diego, CA.)

For reasons that may never be revealed, Travis McGee once talked with an elderly woman on her front porch in Charleston, S.C.

She told him her life story. It was a tale so sad that McGee's eyes were misted and his voice was thick with emotion when he murmured sympathetically, genuinely touched by the tragic events she described.

That's when she serenely produced a Luger from beneath her shawl and did her best to put a bullet through the lump in McGee's throat.

She missed, but not by much. The bullet nicked his collar.

Why did she try to kill McGee? Why was he there talking to her? Why was he even in Charleston in the first place? Those questions remain unanswered for the readers of the McGee novels. But the incident is there, in McGee's past, described all to briefly in One Fearful Yellow Eye.

The incident in Charleston is just one of more than a hundred bare-bones episodes in McGee's past.

To date, all that readers know of events such as the Charleston shooting has been in the form of casual hints dropped by McGee or someone close to him. Those casual hints can only be described as "teasers."

Arthur Conan Doyle did the same thing to the readers of his Sherlock Holmes stories. He, too, would have characters hint at Holmes' unchronicled adventures. In the course of 60 tales that covered 1,323 pages, Doyle fed 72 teasers to his readers.

John D. MacDonald has outdone Doyle with a total of 108 teasers in 20 novels that span 4,685 pages.* Those teasers, never fleshed out into full-scale stories, nevertheless reveal much about McGee's philosophies, experiences and early life. Many of those teasers were discussed in the last issue of the JDM Bibliophile.

Some of those experiences were far more painful, either physically or mentally, than the one in which the sweet little old lady tried to kill McGee on her veranda. For instance, sveral weeks or months after he'd returned from New York, where he'd sold a number of golden idols (GOLD), he spent some time that left him with a sour memory of too many "fervid conversations, midnight plots and dirty little violences for which I was all too unprepared." One of those dirty little violences left him with a knife scar six inches below his armpit (ORANGE). This probably was the scar referred to some years later when McGee indicated that he had survived an encounter with "an angry fellow with a sharp knife" (CRIMSON).

Another angry fellow he met once wielded a two-by-four, and whacked McGee solidly across the back with it. The impact left him with numb legs and a conviction--happily incorrect--that his spine was broken (BROWN).

And there was the time when he made the mistake of not defending himself properly against at least two women, in all liklihood a pair of butch dyke lesbians. McGee survived the encounter, but for days afterward, had to move very carefully--"like an 88-year-old man," he recalled later (RED).

With people like these in his background, it's no wonder that he told Carrie Milligan he knew some people "who are hungry enough to nail me, they'd unearth a girl from six years ago and use her to get me" (LEMON). McGee is far more cautious these days.

Just as painful to him were the romances gone wrong. McGee has always been a mender of what he calls the "broken birds." But there were two birds who stayed broken.

Marianne was one. McGee took her to Hope Island, the volunteer retreat for alcoholics near Bastion Key. He identified her simply as "a customer"--a woman who later died when she drove a borrowed car into a tree. But Stan Burley, the operator of Hope Island, identified her by name, and told Dana Holtzer that McGee had worked hard with him in an effort to dry Marianne out (RED).

---

*This would include Travis McGee #20, CINNAMON SKIN, but not, of course, THE LONELY SILVER RAIN, which followed. One difficulty about writing on JDM--which I have experienced myself--is that JDM produces books so fast that another one comes out--often--before you're finished writing what you have to say about him, based on what he's written up to that time. So what do you do with the new book?--Your Ed.

The other was Mary Catherine, and she apparently was not quite as tragic to McGee. She was the girl he tried to help kick her barbiturate habit. He took Mary Catherine to an isolated cabin in North Carolina and kept her there for weeks. But every time he'd go to town for supplies, he'd return to find her high on something. He finally discovered that she was sniffing fumes from the lantern fuel as a substitute for the drugs she craved. McGee confessed that he was relieved when she vanished from his life at last (INDIGO).

Most of the McGee teasers aren't nearly as painful as the above examples, however. They're about people he's met, or events--often dramatic, sometimes funny--that he's observed or participated in. Here, in pretty much chronological order, are the teasers that deal with characters or events:

HARRY--McGee apparently often used this "elderly angle player" who moved on the fringes of the New York underworld. It was Harry who obtained a blue sapphire for McGee, and sho later helped him sell certain ancient gems from Asia (BLUE).

FRAN WEAVER--McGee probably made a recovery for this woman, the widow of Hyde Weaver. And some months later, she recommended McGee to Mona Fox Yeoman as someone who might solve her problems (PURPLE).

THE COIN COLLECTOR--This Jacksonville, Florida, woman's collection of gold coins had vanished, and McGee knew who had taken them--her stepson. McGee estimated it would take only a few days to track him down and shake the coins out of him. He considered the coin theft alternate possibility for a salvage operation when he flew out west to hear Mona Yeoman's proposition.

It's unlikely that he ever followed up on the coin collector's problem, however, for when he returned to Fort Lauderdale with Isobel Webb in a happy romantic daze, their only concern was to prepare The Busted Flush, McGee's houseboat, for sea and shove off for Webb Cay in the Bahamas (PURPLE).

WALTER LOWRY--This screenwriter apparently was involved in some say in a McGee recovery. He described McGee to Lysa Dean as "clever and tough and lucky" (RED). McGee later contacted Lowry at his San Francisco home to learn the actress' new telephone number (CRIMSON).

THE UNSTABLE PARISIENNE--McGee once encountered "an unstable" woman from Paris. Learning that she was carrying a gun, McGee stole it from her purse--a tiny, flat Italian-made pistol--and kept it. He later smuggled it into Mexico (GOLD).

ROGER BLISS--Except for what McGee termed "an unfortunate taint of honest," this Hollywood, Florida, art gallery owner could have been one of the world's great con men. He could impersonate on demand Air Force colonels, college deans, psychiatrists or Oklahoma wildcatters, McGee said--and there's a distinct possibility that Bliss and McGee may have teamed up for at least one salvage operation (ORANGE).

BENNY THE MOANER--Untainted by Roger Bliss' honesty, Benny at one time had been a highly successful con artist before retiring to Nashville. Shortly before he went into retirement, he made a good score--but McGee moved in almost immediately and stole the money back. Angry, Benny sent "muscle" after McGee. McGee returned the muscle to Benny sore, aching, humiliated and empty-pocketed. Benny had no love for McGee, but he told Calvin Stebber of Tampa, in the same line of business, that McGee at least didn't "holler cop" (ORANGE).

SIR THOMAS' WIFE--This "lovely and grateful" titled Englishwoman once spent a passionate night with McGee. The date was July 24th--and afterward she presented him with a $250 Charatan peinlaid with the numbers 724 in silver. McGee referred to her as a "client," which indicates that the wife of the man he identified only as "Sir Thomas" had employed McGee's salvage talents before becoming emotionally involved with him, however briefly (AMBER).

THE OLD TIMER--McGee put on a convincing drunk act in the Annex in Broward Beach, Florida. He credited a "very talented old-time con man" with coaching him carefully in "the fine art of appearing to be very drunk" (AMBER). Did McGee receive this training for some specific purpose, or just in case such a skill might come in handy in the future?

JAKE KARLO--Miami talent agency operator Jake Karlo became the target for some con artists who nearly took control of his business. A friend recommended McGee; McGee and Karlo waited until the con men relaxed, and then worked their own swindle. They sent the artists packing with less money than they'd had when they moved in on Karlo (AMBER).

THE ACID PARTY--McGee once helped a father get his daughter out of an acid party in downtown Miami, tracking down a group of nine young people, all high on some sort of hallucinogen. The man's daughter wound up in a sanitarium (YELLOW).

THE PAYOFF--Why was McGee in New York, involved in an operation that required a payoff to some as-yet unidentified party? McGee expressed a reluctant admiration for the way in which the payoff was set up. The method apparently circumvented a surveillance system he'd set up, and he called it the "cleanest" such operation he'd ever seen (YELLOW).

THE PALM BEACH COUPLE--Among McGee's many friends in Florida are a "crazy, wonderful couple" in Palm Beach. They have a huge house, a staff of servants and "scads" of adopted children (YELLOW).

HARRY SIMMONS--The relationship of Harry Simmons and McGee is not clear, but Simmons apparently is something of an authority on suicides. McGee remembered a conversation in which Simmons talked about his specialty; it resulted in McGee's drawing certain conclusions about the three "suicide attempts" by Maureen Pearson Pike (BROWN).

THE AD AGENCY RIPOFF--McGee once made a "good recovery" for a Miami-based advertising firm after an unbonded secretary vanished with a large amount of cash from the office safe. During that salvage operation, he and Meyer became acquainted with Cuban-born Ron Townsend, who later became the agency's representative in and expert on Mexico (INDIGO).

THE BRIDGE-PLAYER--Why was McGee on a stakeout that lasted two months? With what group or organization was he working (more than half a dozen people were involved)? Where? There's no way of telling. All we know is that McGee spent eight weeks with "a quiet little man" who played random hands of rubber bridge in his head (LAVENDER).

SIR HENRY BRENT-ARCHER--A friend recommended McGee to Sir Henry Brent-Archer, a wealthy Englishman who had fallen victim to an extortionist. McGee became a guest in the Brent-Archer home in the British Virgin Islands, and three weeks later made a full recovery of the money. Some years after Sir Henry's death, McGee became briefly involved with his widow, Lady Jillian "Jilly" Brent-Archer (TAN).

WILLY NUCCI--Who wanted to kill Willy Nucci? Why? How did McGee get involved, and where did he and Nucci hole up, waiting for the riflemen to find them? Those are questions that probably will never be answered--another bare-bones mystery unlikely to be fleshed out into a full-fledged story. Nucci, as everyone knew, managed the Contessa Hotel in Miami Beach, and was the front for New Jersey mob money.

But what everyone knew wasn't so. Nucci, feeling that he and McGee had only hours to live, broke a long silence and told McGee the truth--he was completely honest, an excellent hotel man who secretly owned the controlling interest in the Contessa, but found it convenient to keep up the fiction of a mob connection. Later, of course, he regretted his impulse to talk. "Okay, I wanted to tell somebody," he admitted to McGee. "I wanted to brag. We had a lot of time and nothing to do, and neither of us figured we had a chance of getting out of there since it was daylight and they could use those goddamn rifles" (SCARLET).

THE YACHT CLUB--A few years before McGee met Mary Alice McDermit, the highly exclusive Royal Biscayne Yacht Club experienced what McGee called a very ugly problem. McGee posed as a member and solved the problem quietly. The grateful board of governors awarded him a special no-fee, no-dues membership (SCARLET), which gave him reciprocal privileges in the Hawaii Yacht Club in Honolulu later (TURQUOISE).

CAPTAIN MATTY LAMARR--McGee and Miami Police Detective Captain Matty Lamarr had some kind of confrontation that left each with a healthy respect for the other, though Lamarr remained suspicious of McGee. Lamarr reluctantly vouched for him to Detective Sgt. Goodbread. "The captain didn't say you were one of his favorite people," commented Goodbread. And McGee replied, "He's not one of mine, but we got along all right one time" (SCARLET).

THE MAN WITH FOUR IDENTITIES--At one time McGee knew a man "who had to carry four complete sets of identity papers in his line of work." The line of work was unspecified, and so was McGee's relationship with this unnamed man--who could have been a con artist or a government agent. This was the man who taught McGee how to carry cash safely--beneath an elastic bandage on his knee (TURQUOISE).

THE RICH WIDOW--On the Christmas before he died, a man gave his wife a black opal ring. She failed to insure it, and some time after her husband's death it was stolen. McGee made "the right contact" which allowed her to buy back the piece of jewelry. The salvage proved so simple that McGee didn't charge his usual half-the-value fee. The widow, also unnamed, presented him with a Pulsar digital watch as a gift (TURQUOISE).

BOO BRODEY--McGee turned down an offer from an old friend named Boo Brodey, who wanted him to become a partner, even manager, of a scheme to smuggle marijuana from Jamaica (LEMON).

DUKE DAVIS--When another old friend asked a favor, however, McGee responded. Duke Davis injured his back and sent for McGee, who joined him in the Grenadines to help him sail his ketch, The Antsie, home to Fort Lauderdale. It proved to be a grueling trip; the wind was against them all the way (COPPER).

LADY VIVIAN STANLEY-TUCKER--McGee agreed to try to make a recovery of a necklace, worth 40,000 British pounds, stolen from Lady Vivian Stanley-Tucker of St. Kitts (GREEN). Whether he was successful or not has never been revealed.

SARAH ISSOM--McGee "did a favor" for artist Sarah Issom, who recommended him to fellow painter Ron Esterland a few years later. McGee, incidentally, owns one of Ms. Issom's paintings, an aerial view of a seascape with plenty of blue in it (Crimson).

LAURA HONNEKER, M.D.--Eleven years prior to the explosion which destroyed Meyer's John Maynard Keynes, a patient stole the confidential files of Fort Lauderdale psychiatrist Laura Honneker, M.D. A mutual friend put her in touch with McGee, who brought in both the thief and the missing files the following day (CINNAMON).

RON ROBINETT--Almost certainly McGee once gave a thorough thumping to mean-eyed Ron Robinett, a Bahai Mar resident who lived aboard a motor sailer and had "an income from a mysterious source." This thumping apparently was a painful memory to Robinett, for when McGee foiled an attempt by him to pick up a drink-befuddled Laura Honneker, Robinett backed down in a hurry rather than face McGee again (CINNAMON).

The McGee teasers contain one slight contradiction. He told Hirsh Fedderman, "I don't know a thing about stamps and coins" (SCARLET). Maybe McGee meant the finer points of stamp collecting. For when he was a teenager, McGee did own some semi-rare stamps. He traded a block of them, along with a .22 rifle and $16, for an ancient Packard Phaeton (YELLOW).

Later, he received a large chunk of his retirement--$30,000 worth --from a Miami area philatelist who had lost the most valuable stamps in his collection. Within five days, with the help of "a cop friend," McGee had recovered the missing items, returned them to their owner and had received the cash--plus a note that gave him "free meals for life in the best Greek restaurants in four states" (GRAY).

When Fedderman presented McGee with a one-of-a-kind antique stamp worth $40,000, McGee decided to keep it--for a time, at least--despite the fact that his cash was beginning to run low (SCARLET).

At least three, possibly four, teasers dropped by McGee refer to people whom readers have met previously:

The first was when McGee became more than a little choked up after Vangie Bellemer asked about the woman's clothing he'd given her aboard the Flush. "The girl who owned these clothes is dead," he told her (AMBER). He was speaking of Lois Atkinson (BLUE), of course. And it was Lois he had in mind, too, when he told her story, deliberately playing on the emotions of Helena Pearson aboard The Likely Lady later (BROWN).

For purposes of his own, McGee brought up the subject of certain compromising photos taken of a "Famous Name in the (show business) Industry." This conversational gambit opened interesting topics during dinner-table chatter at the home of Bruce Bundy in Oaxaca, Mexico (INDIGO). It was, of course, a reference to Lysa Dean (RED).

McGee also recalled a conversation with "a damned fine surgeon" who told about patients whose lives he had saved. "They become your people, your kids," he told McGee. "You want the good things to come to them...." McGee remembered those comments when he found himself wanting the good things for Vangie Bellemer, whose life he had saved (AMBER). The surgeon's identity was not revealed, but it seems likely that it might have been Dr. Fortner Geis of Chicago (YELLOW).

Two of the most intriguing teasers to be found deal with why McGee is the way he is. These teasers are in the first and the latest of the McGee novels.

In the latter, Dr. Laura Honneker openly speculated that there must have been some incident during McGee's formative years that gave him a distaste for most kinds of permanence. Such an incident, she indicated, must have resulted in his beach-bum knight-errant lifestyle.

McGee made no comment (CINNAMON).

In the first story, a nearly hysterical Lois Atkinson was far more blunt. "Who did this to you?" she demanded, apparently convinced that McGee lived the way he did because of some tragedy in his background.

McGee's reply was almost brutal. "I'll never know you well enough to try to tell you, Lois" (BLUE).

Was there someone, probably a woman, or something, some tragedy other than his brother's suicide, in McGee's past? Did some event in his impressionable years change his life?

To paraphrase McGee himself, we--the readers--may never know him well enough to find out.

END

. . . & EVERYTHING

by Len and June Moffatt

THE KINK IN YELLOW: In this day and age of ridiculous prices for automobiles and baseball players--not to mention the equally ridiculous cost of repair work on either--I still feel a bit of a shock to my central nervous system, as well as to my Scots blood, when I am reminded that one could purchase a 224-page paperback novel for only 50¢ just twenty years ago. And if said novel happened to be ONE FEARFUL YELLOW EYE, the eighth in the T. McGee series, one really had made one hell of a good buy.

Twenty years. That's a bit less than one third of my lifetime. Which means that I can also remember when Pocket Books, Inc. brought out their first paperbacks at only two bits a copy...and the ongoing griping by us readers when prices jumped from twenty-five to fifty cents, and then to seventy-five, and to a dollar and upward, ever upward. Add this to the fact that the quality of printing, proofreading, paper and binding have gone down and down, so that our gripe is going to go on and on. The same can be said for hardcover books. It would seem that the art of good book-making is limited nowadays to the small presses who publish more for love than for money, and have to charge higher prices than the average book buyer can afford for their limited editions.

All of which has little to do with YELLOW except that it is a subject McGee himself might attack in his occasional sermons on our plastic society.

The "Kink" in the subtitle is not a reference to Travis, perish forbid, but rather refers to the nasties in this novel of high-powered blackmail and human unkindness. McGee travels to Chicago to answer a call for help from a lady friend, widow of a wealthy surgeon, who has learned that the estate is short $600,000, and that her in-laws believe that she has squirreled it away somewhere. The fact that she is the younger second wife of the late doctor doesn't help, as she knew he was a dying man when she married him. A classic, even a cliche, situation, but one that the author takes and molds into a more complicated scenario.

JDM once said that he writes "whydunnits" rather than "whodunnits" but this novel qualifies in both categories. It has all the suspense of his other "whydunnits" but there is a mystery here as to who was able to make the dying man turn the bulk of his estate into cash and turn it over to them, and why he felt he had no other choice. We know it couldn't be Trav's friend Glory, the widow. But what about Heidi, the "ice maiden", or her brother, these two being Glory's stepchildren? Or Anna, the German housekeeper, or Saul, jailbird husband of Anna's daughter, Gretchen, who was the mother of the illegitimate child fathered by the late doctor. Then there is the doctor's favorite nurse who had an affair with him, and the family lawyer who, like Glory, certainly appears to be on the up-and-up. Whodunnit, indeed. I'll never tell. (Did I reveal the surprise in SILVER as did almost every other reviewer in the country? No, and even at this late date I won't discuss it, and won't until I'm sure everyone has had a chance to read the book. I suppose the paperback reprint will come out real soon now, so not until after that...)

Chicago folks may not be happy with McGee's impressions of that great city, but that should not stop them from enjoying the story. JDM and McGee have dealt just as harshly (perhaps moreso) with New York and Los Angeles, as well as with their adopted state, Florida.

Having covered GRAY, along with SILVER, last time, I will now proceed to reread BROWN, while waiting for the next one, which I understand is in process.

BOUCHERCON XVI: It was indeed a sweet sixteenth BoucherCon for us, that last weekend of October, 1985, in San Francisco. As Fan Guests of Honor we were treated royally and are most grateful to the hard-working committee who put on a very good convention. The total membership was 815, and as far as I know broke all records to date. That figure includes daily memberships, but even so, it must be the record. The Pro Guest of Honor was the California Crime Novel, as ably represented by Joe Gores, Joseph Hansen and Collin Wilcox. The list of individual speakers and panelists would fill more space than we have here. To name just a few: John Ball, Jon Breen, Howard Browne, William Campbell Gault, Sue Grafton, Tony Hillerman (funny as ever as the Toastmaster), John Lutz, Kathi Maio, Sara Paretsky, Bill Pronzini, Roger L. Simon, Walter Shine (who praised and "roasted" us delightfully on the first night of the convention), Don Yates, and oh, so many more.

The 17th BoucherCon will be in Baltimore, presumably over the 1986 Columbus Day weekend, and the 18th is to be in Minneapolis. The 19th will come back to the West Coast. June and I are on a steering committee bidding for that one for the Los Angeles area. We have heard a rumor that there might be a competing bid from someone in San Diego. We have made it clear to our committee that we do not want the chairmanship (should we win the bid) but are willing to help with advice and maybe setting up one or two program items. Long-time readers of this magazine are familiar with our attempts to cut down on convention work, but it is hard not to be a part of something being done locally, especially something that we had a hand in starting so many years ago.

Which reminds me of one incident on the day before BoucherCon opened. A couple of friends were having difficulty at the hotel desk getting a room they had reserved months earlier. Turned out the problem was that there were still people there from the convention that had just ended, and so all the rooms weren't available. They did get a room (actually, part of a suite!) after Art Scott, who did yeoman work on this committee, even as he does for DAPA-EM, talked a bit with the hotel management.

But before this happened, I was all ready to go up to the desk and do my Dealing With The Hotel number. The old firehorse was ready to gallop off to yet another fire. June reminded me that we were guests of the convention and not on the committee, and that it would be neither fitten nor proper to intercede for our friends. We had obtained our room with no difficulty, possibly because our reservations had been made for us by the committee, and it was up to the committee to get the matter settled. Of course, if they had needed our help...but obviously, they didn't.

Our contribution to the program was to show some slides of past BoucherCons with suitable commentary, and to say a few words at the Banquet. We'll be writing a more detailed report for DAPA-EM, which, incidentally, we got into sooner than expected. As reported lastime, our fanzine for DAPA-EM is called A FLASH OF BLUE, and we haven't missed a mailing since we joined. Whether we will be able to keep up that pace remains to be seen, but it is a lot of fun.

So we are getting more writing and reading done, although I am (as usual) way behind on the latter and probably will be until the day I can read no more. No, I'm not going blind, but I suppose I shall have to die some day. It is nice to be as old as I am and still be able to read, pound the typer, do a full day's work at the office, and keep the love of an intelligent and sexy lady.

And when one has a lot of fine friends such as one sees at BoucherCons, meets in the pages of JDMB and in DAPA-EM, well, that's just more icing on the cake. All of this helps to balance out the yahooism in this old world and tends to make one forget that one's chronological age has any importance.

CHI P.I. V.I.: For another view of Chicago, one that is as honest as McGee's in YELLOW but perhaps more loving, we recommend the V. I. Warshawski novels by Sara Paretsky. We have read the first two, INDEMNITY ONLY and DEADLOCK. *((I might point out that the second title mentioned above is a pun. - jmm))*

There is a third one, but we don't have it (or its title) at hand, though we plan to remedy that the next time we're in a bookstore. V. (for Victoria, but she prefers to be called "Vic" rather than "Vicki") I. Warshawski is a quite believable woman private investigator who uses her brains as well as her knowledge of fighting to solve these hard-boiled whodunnits.

Unlike TV's "LADY BLUE" she is not a female version of Dirty Harry, but an intelligent and independent young lady who knows her way around that toddlin' town and has the patience, perseverance and toughness to uncover and upset the baddies. If Travis ever goes to Chicago again, he could do well to enlist her aid. Of course, they live in two different fictional universes, but when one reads two novels (almost back-to-back) with Chicago backgrounds, the thought does come to mind.

Ms. Paretsky, whom we had the pleasure of meeting at BoucherCon, is yet another of the new writers in the mystery field. There seem to be so many new ones in the field, and most of them are good story-tellers and give fresh new slants on old themes, plus bringing in some new themes of their own. Female private eyes in the hardboiled school are not exactly new, but her development of the idea (and the character) is practical, realistic, imaginative and most effective.

THE BEET GENERATION: Every once in a while, I read a so-called "mainstream" novel if what I've read about it leads me to believe that it is not just another potboiler "best seller". Now, Tom Robbins has been around a while--the name rang a bell because I read a lot of book reviews in newspapers and magazines--but I really had no idea that he was my kind of writer. But the title alone, JITTERBUG PERFUME, kept catching my eye and arousing my curiosity. So we got the paperback edition and were not disappointed. A novel that starts out by telling you all about the virtues of that common garden vegetable, the beet, can't be all bad, I figured, and for my money, I figured right. This book is a fantasy, a sort of historical romance (dealing mostly with the history of perfume, or at least Mr. Robbins' version of same), a tale of the great god Pan, and most certainly a wild satire. Also, it is a mystery novel. It spans centuries from ancient times to modern times and takes the reader to such varied locales as Europe, Seattle and New Orleans. The cast of characters are intriguing to the reader as they intrigue among themselves. Warning to those who hate puns and other plays on words. The book is full of them, and I loved it. Perhaps most of you have either read the book (or ignored it) at this late date, but if you haven't, both June and I recommend it for its laughs and its insight. Needless to say, we will try to catch up with the Robbins novels we have ignored up to now. The spirit of Dean Swift is within him--and coming out in wonderful words. A bit of Sam Johnson there too, I think.

CONVENTIONALLY SPEAKING: 1985 didn't see us at as many conventions as past years, or maybe it seems that way because we only went out of the state (to Phoenix) for one, and out of the Southern California area for just one, the BOUCHERCON. The West Coast SF Conference (WesterCon) was in Sacramento. We didn't make it to that one, nor did we make it to the World SF Convention in Australia. We would have liked to have gone to the latter, but time and finances would not permit. Besides, we keep hoping to get back to England someday, and would rather save our pences for that. Locally, we attended a small s-f con where we were on a panel about the s-f fan hobby and its history, and June will be on a panel at our local s-f club's convention (over the long Thanksgiving weekend), the subject of which is "Where Do Fans Come From?" She is a second-generation s-f fan and her kids (my step-kids) are third-generation s-f fans. Of course, there aren't that many second-generation fans in s-f fandom, so the question should cover where all those others come from. The original s-f fans (going back to the thirties) were those who wrote letters to the pulp mags and then started writing to each other, publishing fanzines, and eventually organizing clubs and conventions. Nowadays, there are no lettercolumns in the pro-mags to speak of, and the pulps have been replaced by TV, so the new fans come in through the conventions of which s-f fandom has more than any one person could reasonably attend, month in and month out. Mystery fandom, on the other hand... But that's the subject of an article I'm supposed to write for DAPA-EM...

1986's WesterCon is in San Diego in July. We expect to go to that one, and hope to make it to the Baltimore BoucherCon, as well as to the one or two local s-f cons, but have no plans to go to the World SF Con in Atlanta. The nice thing is that we aren't committed to work on any of those conventions...but 1988 isn't all that far in the future.

I could take my full retirement in '88, but I may elect to work beyond retirement, depending on various things. If I still have the same boss, I know I could do that if I so desired, but time, as the old saw goes, will tell...in a big loud voice or a soft, insinuating whisper...

The Shine Section

(We regret our absence from these pages last issue. In the immortal words of Strother Martin in Cool Hand Luke: "It was a failure to communicate.")

BOUCHERCON BRIEFS

Bouchercon XVI has come and gone. We were there and glad we were. These conventions, you will recall, are named for the late Anthony Boucher, for many years the columnist-critic of the New York Times Sunday Book Review. His column was called "Report on Criminals at Large". He recognized JDM's talent almost from the outset of his career. On March 10, 1957, reviewing JDM's original paperback DEATH TRAP he said, in part:

> This department has long contended that readers who confine themselves to hardcover books are missing a large number of today's best suspense novels, and no author's work documents the contention more convincingly than that of John D. MacDonald...
>
> Though MacDonald succeeds in these mass media rather than among the (in theory) more cultivated coterie of bookstore patrons, his work is free alike of violent vulgarity or slick unreality. Hardly a suspense writer can surpass him in honest and intimate examination of character, or in the integration of a crime with its milieu--novelistic objectives which he attains without any sacrifice of story-telling vigor.

Bouchercon attendance leads to ancillary delights. We started toward San Francisco by flying to San Diego. There we called Jim Neal, limericist extraordinaire (see JDMB #32,p.26) and fine McGee researcher (see JDMB #35,p.20, and JDMB #36,p.26)who works at the San Diego Tribune, a pebble toss from our motel. We asked him to meet us in the lobby; on arrival there was but one inhabitant. We approached and asked:"Jim Neal?" He said "Yes" and got up--and up--

and up. When he reached the top of his ascent, 6 ft.7in. from ground zero we looked up at all 315 lbs. in utter awe. A pleasant visit full of the camaraderie we've come to expect from the JDM admirers we've met.

Later, on the way to L.A., met with David and Jean Hughes, who presented us with a taped interview David had made with JDM Sept. 7,1974, at the MacDonalds' Lake Piseco home. The interview was then aired as part of David's series "What's So Great About Upstate New York?" Fascinating.

* * *

Arrived finally in San Francisco;the male half of the Shine team had been asked to open the convention by introducing Len & June Moffatt as Fan Guests of Honor. He considered it a rare privilege. After recounting the Moffatts' roles in more than 40 years of convention attending he hailed them with this:

> The Moffatts, always acting in tandem,
> Attend all conventions at random,
> Sherlockon or Westercon,
> Bouchercon or ANYcon
> They're the King and Queen of all fandom.

And, after suggesting that they had raised CONvention going to an art, concluded the introduction by calling them the World's Greatest CON Artists.

* * *

Ross Thomas was one of the principal participants at the convention. He was interviewed by Wayne Warga (of Entertainment Tonight) and Jim Pepper (of Pepper & Stern). Highly literate, urbane and witty (as are his books) Thomas was greatly enjoyed. We waylaid him after the panel's end and told him how often JDM has expressed admiration for his work. He replied: "Please tell John,next time you write or speak to him, that when I returned from a stay in Spain I had a fallow period. To fill in some time I took all the Travis McGee books out of storage, re-read them, and found them to be the greatest study of 20th century anthropology I have ever read." Message delivered, JDM.

* * *

One of the disadvantages of attending the convention was that we learned too late of a TV show we missed during our travels. Some cable stations, as well as WGN-Chicago, carried, on"Tales From the Dark Side", the TV version of "Ring Around the Redhead", an early MacDonald science-fiction story. We would be obliged to any reader who saw it, or otherwise knows, for details of the cast or any other aspect of the production.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Everyone knows that the first story MacDonald wrote was "Interlude In India", written while in the Army in Asia. But what about his second writing effort? Even he, in interviews, refers to one of the pulp stories which appeared in 1946. Not so. For the first time in this publication we reveal that it occurred aboard ship as he was being returned to this country at the conclusion of his military service. However, it is unlikely it will ever see the light of day. Here's the scoop:

On the boring 68-day trip from Calcutta to the United States a British thriller "Kiss the Blood Off My Hands" was being passed around, but some "sadistic slob" (JDM's characterization) had torn out the last pages of the book. It infuriated many of the soldiers. So, for want of something to do, JDM wrote an ending for the book, typed it, and pasted it in the book. Those who then read it liked the ending and their praise may have given added incentive (in addition to the $25 received from Story magazine for "Interlude")to his writing career. What say, John? Want to write it again?

CONFUSION CONFOUNDED

There has been enough confusion about writers whose names--given or assumed--resemble that of John D. MacDonald. This will nip in the bud one which has great potential for misinterpretation. The Seattle (Wash.)Times & Post-Intelligence has a Travel Editor whose name is: "John D. Macdonald." JDM has written several travel articles for newspapers in the last few years and there may be many a confused reader in the future. Have a care.

PATER PATTER

Last issue JDMB had some loose-lipped talk about fatherhood in a certain book whose title we won't mention lest we add to the already unwarranted disclosure of the surprise ending. But we'd like to add a word. No, we'd like to add JDM's words when he was asked some years ago to comment on the meaning of Father's Day:

> It is an undue celebration of a usually inadvertent event.

CENSORSHIP-ARABIAN STYLE

We've mentioned before how much pleasure, information and excitement we've derived from visits to the John D. MacDonald Collection housed in the Rare Books Division of the University of Florida Libraries (Gainesville). Manuscripts, letters and memorabilia give insight into the readership that so avidly communicates with JDM.

Our most recent visit found us reading a letter from Pat Gordon who has been working as a pilot in Saudi Arabia for over five years. He found a whole collection of MacDonald books in a new bookstore in Jeddah, among which was one of the new printings of THE BRASS CUPCAKE. The cover is

seemingly innocuous as the copy below, on the left, shows. Compare it, however, with the one Gordon bought, after being subjected to the censor's magic marker.

Apparently the British busby is much preferred over California wine in Araby.

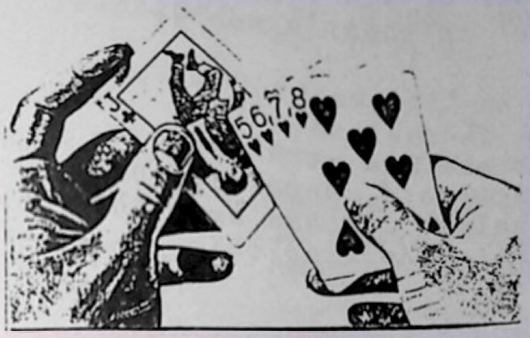
CHAUDS LES VACATIONS

Sampson Cay, in the Bahamas Exuma Cays, permanent population 5, is one of the most attractive settled places in the 150 mile long chain. There last summer, as we have been 16 summers past, we happened to engage in conversation about JDM (yes, we have been known to do that) with a charming Frenchman who told us he had more than 50 of JDM's books at home. We remembered that we had not been able to get a satisfactory translation for "Chauds les ballons!",the French title for FREE FALL IN CRIMSON. The literal translation, "Hot, the balloons!" seemed strange and inappropriate. But not for our Gallic friend who told us that the Parisian street vendors hawk their hot chestnuts with an expression comparable to the American ballpark vendors who yell,"Red hot! Get 'em while they're hot!"The Parisians yell, "Chauds les marrons!" meaning "Chestnuts, they're hot!" Thus, the French publisher used that expression-pun to refer to the hot air balloons in FREE FALL IN CRIMSON. The explanation came at that tiny island after the talents of the University of Florida romance language department, a University of Pittsburgh French professor and three dictionaries had been unavailing. Who says travel isn't broadening?

BUSTED FLUSHES

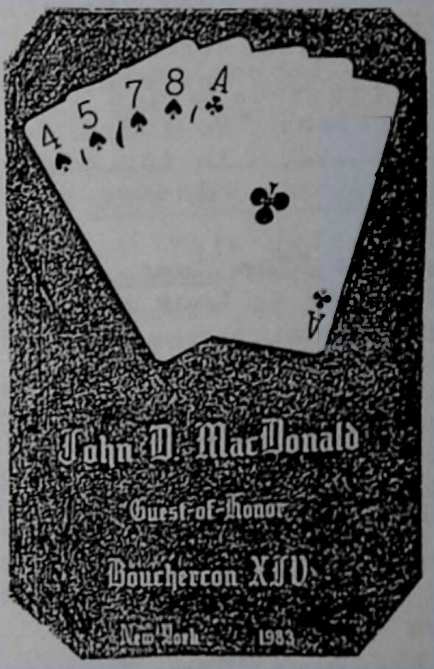
It is passing strange that, despite its popularity, Travis McGee's card hand, his "busted flush" has not been portrayed accurately on those occasions when precision would seem to have been most expected. Meyer, of all people, (who must have heard the story directly from Travis) when

seeking to pour salt on Preston LaFrance's wounds in PALE GRAY FOR GUILT (chapter 13) used five playing cards which (he explained) "he took out of a deck...(and) threw the rest away." He used the "five,six,seven and eight of hearts. And the king of clubs. Right? A busted flush." Ballantine/ Fawcett changed its paperback cover in 1982(see the portion here shown) to illustrate Meyer's effort. All well and good(except for the inexplicable substitution of the Jack for the King)but Meyer, of all people, having a full deck should have used McGee's winning hand:the two,three, seven and ten of hearts and the two of clubs.See THE DEEP BLUE GOOD-BY, chapter Tres.



This same failure accurately to portray the card hand occurred when JDM was presented with a Guest of Honor plaque at Bouchercon 1983. The presenters had the inspiration to show a busted flush (see reproduction) but unhappily used one having no connection with either described in the books. A lost opportunity.

Another quibble: The name of McGee's boat is Busted Flush. Yet the hardcover printings of many (see,e.g.AMBER,INDIGO,LAVENDER, LEMON,COPPER) have had sloppy proof-reading which let the article drift into the name so that it reads The Busted Flush. Those mistakes seem now to be a thing of the past since JDM moved to Knopf as his publisher, and SILVER avoids that error of inclusion. Hurrah!



PUBLICITY

There is ongoing interest in JDM and his work throughout the country. Three 1985 items are worthy of note:

1-Waldenbooks Stores publishes a mystery club newsletter "Crime Times". The April issue (Vol.1,no.2) has a review of THE LONELY SILVER RAIN and a nice interview with JDM which, happily, concludes with his assertion that even "If there were no market for it (his writing) at all, I think I'd probably keep writing, even if I had to bury it in a hole in the yard."

2-A John D. MacDonald exhibit was featured all during December 1985 at the Main Library of the Broward County (Fl.) Library System in conjunction with a reading-discussion series funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association. The series, "What America Reads: Myth Making in Popular Fiction" examined

A TAN AND SANDY SILENCE in lectures by Greg Eisman of Broward Community College and novelist Charles Willeford.

3-PLAYBOY magazine, September 1985, p.22, has a brief but very worthwhile question-and-answer box called "The Inner Life of John D. MacDonald". Those of you who do not read that learned periodical: ask your neighbor's son if you may borrow his copy.

JDM: MAN OF FACT & FICTION

Readers and interviewers often ask how much autobiographical material there is in the MacDonald canon. JDM has said that McGee never goes anywhere unless JDM has been there. As for other things, we've culled a bit--limiting this report to MacDonald's early days. Thus:

Fact: JDM was graduated from Syracuse University. Major: Business Administration. (1938)

Fiction: "I (Andrew Hale McClintock) graduated from Syracuse University three years ago. Business Administration." DEAD LOW TIDE (1953) p.7

Fact: JDM attended the Wharton School of Finance of the University of Pennsylvania. (1936-38)

Fiction: "He (Carl Garrett) had graduated at twenty-two in the class of '37 from the Wharton School of Finance of the University of Pennsylvania." THE DECEIVERS (1958) p.40.

Fact: "The Comte Biancamano...converted to a troop ship... took me from Los Angeles to Bombay a life ago." NOTHING CAN GO WRONG, p.102.

Fiction: "First Lt. Samuel Bowden...took a lengthy cruise on the old Comte de Biancamano...and had eventually ended up in New Delhi in Theater Headquarters of the C.B.I." THE EXECUTIONERS(1958)Chap.One.

Fact: JDM served in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater in New Delhi headquarters, assigned to the OSS "helping keep isolated groups of fighters supplied."

Fiction: "Carl Garrett, for overseas shipment to the CBI theater...was flown by ATC to New Delhi" and was "forever making out lengthy requisitions for supplies." THE DECEIVERS (1958) p.72.

"He (Peter Hume) had been a service officer in the OSS detachment in Calcutta...they thought too highly of him in a supply and administrative category to let him go. Venemous Lady (1948)

Fact: JDM served in Detachment 404 in Ceylon under Lord Louis Mountbatten.

Fiction: (Jerry Jamison) was "assigned to Operations in

OSS Detachment 404 operating...under Lord Louis's headquarters." SOFT TOUCH (1958)Chap.1.

Fact: JDM was discharged from the Army at Ft. Dix, N.J. in 1945.

Fiction: Lee Bronson was discharged from the Army at Ft. Dix, N.J. THE PRICE OF MURDER (1957)Chap.1)

Fact: JDM became ill at the end of his service, had a considerable stay in the hospital, was shipped home and discharged at Dix in 1945.

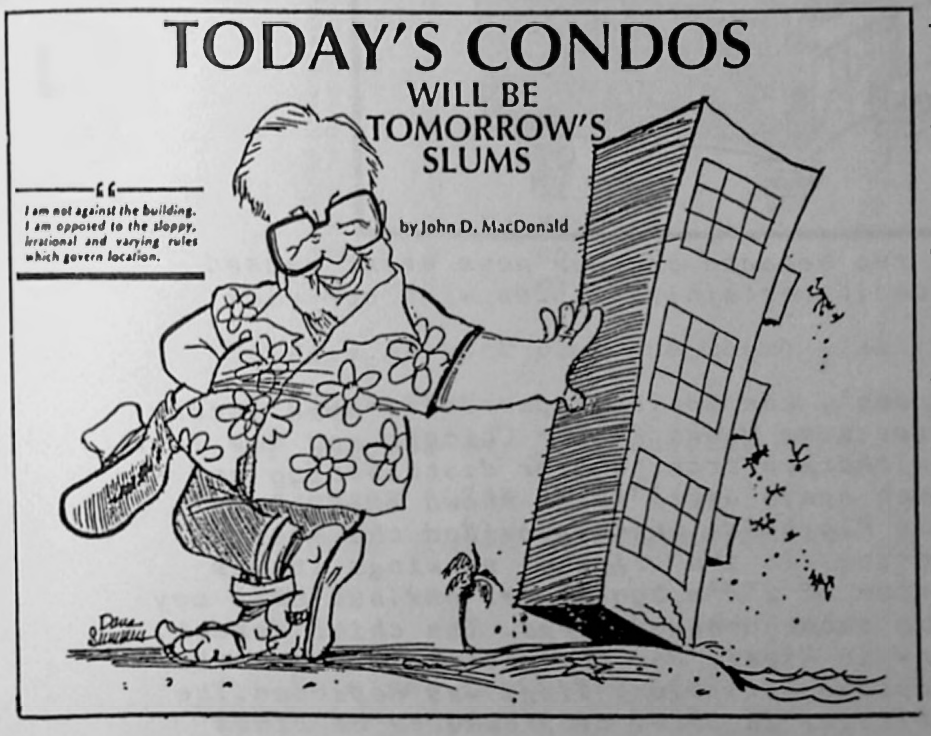
Fiction: "He was liberated in early '45, and after a stay in General Hospital in Calcutta, was shipped home and discharged at Dix." The Tin Suitcase (1948)

Fact: JDM was Director of the Taxpayers' Research Bureau in New York.

Fiction: Teed Morrow was director of a taxpayers' research bureau in western Pennsylvania. JUDGE ME NOT (1951) p.12.

Fact: JDM lived on Jacaranda Street in Cuernevaca, Mexico.

Fiction: John Long's body was taken to the funeral parlor on Jacaranda Street. DEAD LOW TIDE (1953)p.44.


TODAY'S CONDOS
WILL BE
TOMORROW'S
SLUMS
by John D. MacDonald
"I am not against the building. I am opposed to the sloppy, irrational and varying rules which govern location.

COME ALL YE SNOW BIRDS

This delightful cartoon(here miniaturized) appears on the 1986 calendar issued by the Environmental Information Center of the Florida Conservation Foundation (1203 Orange Avenue, Winter Park,Fl.32789).It is called Florida's Calamity Calendar and celebrates over 200 unforgettable events such as the annual jellyfish invasion,the finding of cocaine in yams,Miami's leadership in the drinking of prune juice, the infestations of roaches, and suchlike,all designed to keep some of the snowbirds from their annual southern sojurn and their assistance in despoiling the environment. A fun publication, and JDM's introduction is well worth your contribution of $6 to cover its cost and postage.

MOVIE NOTES

Those who remember the "Travis McGee" TV-movie starring (?) Sam Elliott, will understand the reaction of Lee Judge, fine cartoonist with the Kansas City Star-Times, when he saw the movie (here presented with his permission):

The cartoon did not run because another news event caused its displacement, but it certainly accords with our view of the movie.

* * *

"Flash of Green", the movie, appeared to some decent reviews and played for some weeks in the Chicago and New York areas. It was then withdrawn from theater distribution and is unlikely to be seen again until it is shown on Public Television's American Playhouse which provided the seed money for its production. In its original showings it was slow-paced, a flaw none of JDM's books ever has,but this may have been remedied in subsequent editings. Its chief defect, when we saw a preview in Miami, was the manner in which the motivation of the protagonist, Jimmy Wing, was depicted.The book makes him the victim, in part, of pressures he finds himself unable to resist as he destroys the lives and careers of his friends and neighbors. Ed Harris, playing Jimmy Wing, seems to be positively avid in those undertakings.Nonetheless,

it is a movie far better than the usual rot seen on TV or the big screen these days.

SILVER STUFF

Among the JDM Collection papers we browsed this year was one showing the progression of JDM's work on THE LONELY SILVER RAIN. Always methodical in recordkeeping his summary shows the nuts and bolts of his daily effort. This should answer many questions readers have concerning the details of our favorite author's work habits:

1984	Pages	Total Pages
Jan 10	11	11
11	2	13
12	4	17
13	4	21
14	0	21
15	0	21
16	2	23
17	4	27
18	11	38
19	7	45
20	7	52
21	0	52
22	0	52
23	7	59
24	6	65
25	4	69
26	8	77
27	1	78
28	6	84
29	2	86
30	10	96
31	5	101

1984	Pages	Total Pages
Feb 1	4	105
2	0	105
3	8	113
4	3	116
5	5	121
6	5	126
7	8	134
8	4	138
9	3	141
10	5	146
11	4	150
12	6	156
13	13	169
14	6	175

36 days of work plus one month planning in Sarasota

5 blank days

5.6 pages a day not counting blanks (2250 words)

4.8 pages a day overall (2000 words)

THE COLD SILVER GAZE-Tentative

Pages discarded-101

* * *

Note the tentative title at that time. But another handwritten worksheet showed that other titles were considered. Here is exactly how the sheet reads:

~~The Silver Stare of Hate~~

~~The Angry Silver Glare~~

~~The Hateful Silver Glance~~

The ~~Lost~~ Cold Silver ~~Eyes~~ ~~Glance~~ Stare Gaze

The Narrow Silver Eyes

* * *

Audrey East of Bloomington, Minnesota has corresponded with us on more than one occasion. Her most recent letter points out an interesting gaffe which slipped by JDM and all the readers of SILVER at Knopf (and, we confess, us). On page 216 a young lady tells McGee that her Aunt Velma brought her up. But on page 227 she says she was raised with Velma and "her batch", and she loves "Velma and all her half brothers and sisters." Of course, as Mrs. East rightly says, they were her cousins, not her half brothers and sisters.

We, needless to say to those of you who have read the book, have a particular fondness for SILVER, and have read it more than once. On a second reading we detected a faint resonance from another source and, after pursuing our feeling, found this curious repetition:

From YOU LIVE ONCE (1956) p.73:

> "...the rain sluiced down, lifting a six inch fringe of silver off the asphalt..."

From THE LONELY SILVER RAIN (1984) p.222:

> "The rain...bounced high off the asphalt,an eight-inch curtain fringe of lonely silver rain."

When this was pointed out to JDM his response was:"About the only thing that changed about the rain in 28 years was that it bounced higher. Possibly due to the acid content."

* * *

Tom Emmens of Eugene Oregon,a long-time correspondent and and deep student of JDM writes of an esoteric problem we'll leave for JDM to resolve. This appears in SILVER at page 83: "The effect of gravity on the slug (rifle bullet) is diminished by the angle." Says Tom: "Naw--you can't show me any way to diminish the effect of gravity outside the pulps, though you do sight a rifle as described." Any of you NRA types want to get into this act?

QUICK QUOTES

For many years Reader's Digest has reprinted lines from

other sources in its "Quotable Quotes" and"Pictureque Speech" sections. They have come to an awareness of JDM's prose rather late. (We think they could have been filling whole issues with the wit, wisdom and excitement of his writing.) Here is what they have used:

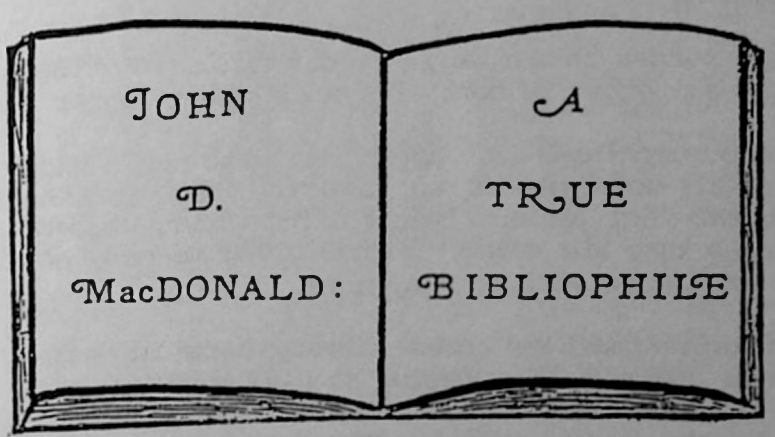
> Everybody must be given a chance, and another and another, and another, as many as the heart can endure. ---ON THE RUN. (June 1983,p.88)

> Integrity is not a conditional word. It doesn't blow in the wind or change with the weather. It is your inner image of yourself, and if you look in there and see a man who won't cheat, then you know he never will.--- THE TURQUOISE LAMENT (July 1985,p.209)

The latter has always been one of our JDM favorites although we must admit to an even greater preference for a somewhat earlier version, by Lillian Hellman, in a letter to the House Un-American Activities (how apt a name for what they did) Committee, in which she refused to divulge the names of fellow artists, asserting:

> I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions.

Unpaid Advt. Unpaid Advt. Unpaid Advt. Unpaid Advt.



PRICE- $4. POSTPAID

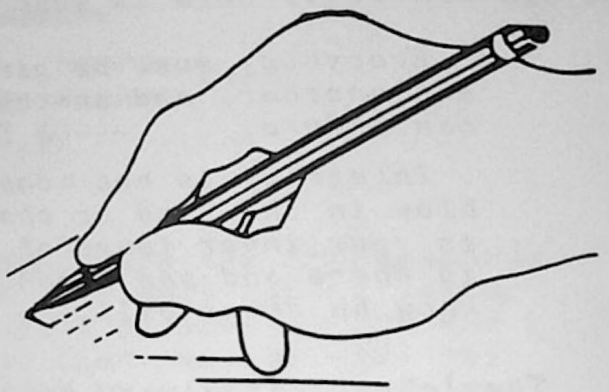
Being a Collection of Sage, Sophisticated Sayings, Profound Praise, Wonderful Wisdom and Wit, Spoken and Writ over a Four Decade Period, on the Virtue, Art and Skill of Reading and Writing-- with Much Critique.

Compiled by

Walter & Jean Shine 122 Lakeshore Drive N.Palm Beach. Florida 33408

Happy New Year To All!
--WALTER & JEAN SHINE--

Please Write For Details



REV. BETTY R. BAILEY, Sanibel, Fla.: JDMB #36 was great except for No "Shine Section"! What happened? (We goofed--the Shines were sailing in the Bahamas and Your Ed. had to go to England so we went to press before the S.S. got here. Apologies to everybody all around, please.--Your Ed.) Great article, "JDM--The Critic Cornered," by Blythe and Sweet. . . . What they need for reference is J. & W. Shine's new book, JDM: A TRUE BIBLIOPHILE. . . . I enjoy the letters and comments about JDM's writings from other JDM fans--we're all truly a family!

J.A.BAUER, U.S. Forces in Germany: After finishing "The Lonely Silver Rain", plus all other TM books I should like to enter a plea to JDM.

Please do not terminate TM. After all, what would Walter Mitty types such as myself do if one of our favorite "tell it like it is" heroes were finished. Oh! let him become a bit older, less do-it-alone, but for our sakes keep him going. He has given me many hours of pleasure and I am looking forward to many more.

Our small U.S. Armed Services library here in Germany has a fine selection of JDM and we're hoping to have more.

My first year's subscription to BIB exceeded my expectations--Please keep up the fine work.

JEAN CHALLMAN, Minneapolis, Minn.: I found you, as I presume many others did, through the American Library Association, and consider you the best 5 buck publication I've ever met up with. . . . But I am not impressed with Len Moffatt's sentence on p. 34 of #36: "I blush that I can't remember the publisher." Well--where has he been? Back in the 18th century before Ben Franklin started the first U.S. Library? I did what he should have done--picked up the phone and called the info dept. of my nearest public libary--30 seconds later I knew Robert Bloch's NIGHT OF THE RIPPER was published in 1984 by Doubleday. Tell him.

JAMES L. DENNIS, Walnut Creek, Cal.: Did anyone see the recent movie, "A Flash of Green"? It came and went so fast here that I missed it. Perhaps with the normal Hollywood finesse, the good story by JDM was screwed up again. Not long ago I went over some early issues of JDMB and it struck me that the recent issues were not half the fun that the early ones used to be. Come on, Ed, let's not lower the standards or the excitement. (Sorry--we're trying.--Your Ed.)

TOM EMMENS, Eugene, Ore.: I particularly appreciate your reprinting of obscure or unpublished items by JDM, things I would not have an opportunity to see but which never fail to entertain and reward. The Brittin and Neal articles were my high spots in #36. Neal's account of the TM teasers is a fine supplement to the Shines' casebook account of Travis' biography. But what happened to the Shine section? (See answer to Betty Bailey, above.--Your Ed.). . . Though I am not a member of any APA or a participant, I agree with the style and philosophy of fandom's amateur publishing: include everything, create dialogue, and make all the waves possible. Without the Shines' section, the Moffatts' contribution might seem distant from the main thrust of the JDMB, but it should not be at all, at all. As long as the Shines' enthusiasm holds, they need to be included; we fans demand it, and we collectors need it. . . . I collect JDMiana--such peripphera as your Rueful Red Reminders, etc. I want to remain a regular and trouble-free subscriber but also want to accumulate the minor productions from you at USF as well. That inclines me to twixtness of rock and hard place. I never tear up the JDMB for the subscription form, and I've developed the habit of not renewing until I get the reminder, which I then don't use for my renewal. . . I realize that's a problem for you, so how about including a copy of the year's reminder in the second annual JDMB's? (Many others do this, and though we're flattered that you want the Reminders, your delay in re-subscribing causes additional trouble and expense. Why not go ahead and resubscribe, and then drop us a line later in the year asking for the next Reminder?--Your Ed.)

RALPH FREAS, Bronx, N.Y.: Enclosed is a "Silver" review from THE NEW YORKER which you may not have seen. Not much of a review--but the sniffy little remark about its ending being "best left unread" begs for comment (After a long quote from SILVER, the review concluded: There is also an ending--with tearful smiles and sobbing strings--that is best left unread.) A funny thing happened to me when Jean Killian kicked and scratched her way into "Silver Rain." A line burbled up out of my Pale Gray memory sludge. The line was "Go grow yourself an orange, lady." Puss Killian's retort to Connie Alvarez, remember? It's a great line. It held much delight for me on first reading and it continues to reverberate with a sense of Puss Killian --independence, toughness, directness, a tot of weltschmerz, and a lot of other stuff. So I pulled Pale Gray from the shelf to make sure I had the line right. I had. And remembering other marvelous scenes and lines, I set to reading Pale Gray one more time. A pleasure.

Silver? Jean Killian is a neat stroke of story-telling. John D. flung ol' spit-eyes smack in the middle of a psychic landscape that may be foreign to Travis but is peopled by most of the rest of us. I can hear the folks murmuring: "Welcome to the club, Travis." "Serves you right, friend." "What are you doing here?" And I have this fantasy about John at his wordprocessor creating the Jean/Travis sequence. He's having trouble punching at the keyboard because he's laughing so hard. Travis' shock. The gee-whiz and wonder at his new estate. Some gulp and golly. On one level, it's a real howler. . . . what he's doing to pore ol' Trav. And we want to know how Travis will handle it.

Anyhow. . . . there's this to be said about Silver's ending: it really isn't one. It's a . . . what's the word? . . . a CLIFFHANGER! Instead of winding down the action, Silver's ending winds up the expectation of yet another TM adventure. Consider. TM is down to his last 400 bucks. Will he have to sell the Busted Flush? Jean aced her SAT's. Will she get into the vet med school of her choice? Trav needs a well-paying salvage job. Are the risks too high with Jean in the background? Travis is tied to the tracks and the locomotive is bearing down on him.

Is the ending "best left unread?" I have a few words for The New Yorker reviewer. Go grow yourself an orange, fella.

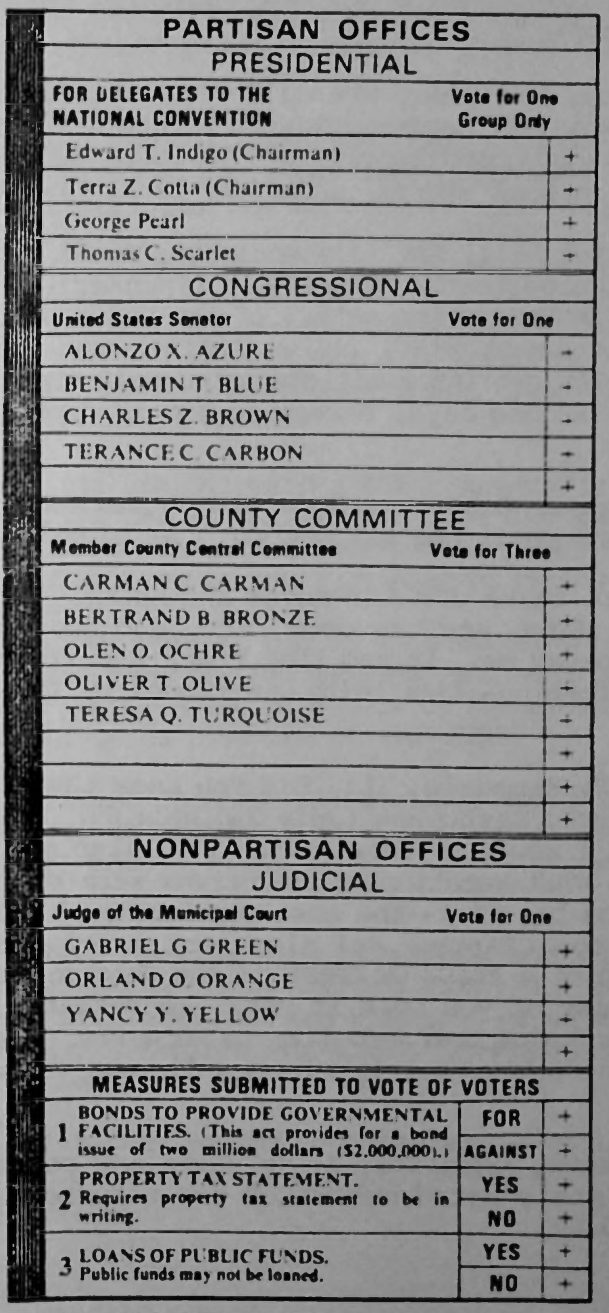
BIB #36 is fancy-schmancy with its justified lines and clean graphics. But there's a lot to be said for the old funky look. Guess you can't please everybody.

RON HEAD, Fairchild AFB, Wa.: The Airforce is trying to make a survivalist out of me. . . . I still prefer the comforts of home or a Holiday Inn (or a Bahia Mar). Recently, I was in South Florida on business, and I took advantage of the trip by staying, at my own expense, at Bahia Mar. I always stay there if I'm near Ft. Lauderdale. Anyway, Susie (my wife) and I were there for a few days. You might be interested in knowing that the Bahia Mar complex is getting bigger. They are adding another high-rise hotel and a high-rise parking garage. Tennis courts are being thrown in somewhere. I wonder what Trav thinks of all this. In order to make room, the builders had to fill in some land on the north side of the complex and move the northern docks (including F Dock). The docks are still there, just moved out from their original locations. No boats were at the docks due to the construction.

Susie and I met Robert Conrad on the beach across from Bahia Mar. He was filming a pilot about a Ft. Lauderdale cop. I hope the show sells. It would be great to see Ft. Lauderdale on TV every week. By the way, Mr. Conrad was very gracious and nice, but maybe that had something to do with Susie's tiny bikini.

Take care, and keep up the good work. I can't get over how good the essays and articles are in the Bib. I usually read everything in one setting, but with the last one I paced myself to enjoy it in small doses. It lasts longer that way.

NANCY E. JONES, Kodiak, Alaska: Here's a sample ballot from the last State of Alaska (and Federal) election. We thought it looked as if JDM had prepared it. . . .



PARTISAN OFFICES

PRESIDENTIAL

FOR DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION	Vote for One Group Only
Edward T. Indigo (Chairman)	+
Terra Z. Cotta (Chairman)	+
George Pearl	+
Thomas C. Scarlet	+

CONGRESSIONAL

United States Senator	Vote for One
ALONZO X. AZURE	+
BENJAMIN T. BLUE	+
CHARLES Z. BROWN	+
TERANCE C. CARBON	+
	+

COUNTY COMMITTEE

Member County Central Committee	Vote for Three
CARMAN C. CARMAN	+
BERTRAND B. BRONZE	+
OLEN O. OCHRE	+
OLIVER T. OLIVE	+
TERESA Q. TURQUOISE	+
	+
	+
	+

NONPARTISAN OFFICES

JUDICIAL

Judge of the Municipal Court	Vote for One
GABRIEL G. GREEN	+
ORLANDO ORANGE	+
YANCY Y. YELLOW	+
	+

MEASURES SUBMITTED TO VOTE OF VOTERS

1	BONDS TO PROVIDE GOVERNMENTAL FACILITIES. (This act provides for a bond issue of two million dollars ($2,000,000).)	FOR	+
		AGAINST	+
2	PROPERTY TAX STATEMENT. Requires property tax statement to be in writing.	YES	+
		NO	+
3	LOANS OF PUBLIC FUNDS. Public funds may not be loaned.	YES	+
		NO	+

D-1176 VOTE BOTH SIDES

(Ms. Jones also included a rave review by JDM in the Doubleday Book Club Bulletin of GEMINI, a new novel by Domini Taylor, and some postcards illustrating what a gorgeous place Alaska is and a brochure about "Cry of the Wild Ram," an outdoor drama that's been playing up there in Kodiak Island for the last 19 years. Maybe Travis should try a change in climate.--Your Ed.)

RICHARD M. LEADER, Bartlesville, OK: "Isaac Asimov Presents the Great Science Fiction Stories 13 (1951)" is now in book stores. Alas, somehow JDM didn't make the grade. Personally, I think he had some great SF's in 1951. Maybe No. 14 (1952) will merit "Incubation" or "Game for Blondes."

JOHN La CROSS, Troy, NY: Just when I'd given up, BIB #35 arrived. You saved me from a nervous breakdown. . . . What, if anything, happened to the rumored/proposed reprint of THE HOUSE GUESTS? (We've seen it in paperback in book stores, under the usual Fawcett label.--Ed.)

BECKY LUNDREN, Spring Hill, KS: I'm enclosing my $5 for 1986, although--after subscribing to the Judas Goat (Spenser)--I think you should increase your subscription rate. If the Judas Goat charges $12, you should get at least $120. . . . I like what Parker <u>can</u> do with Spenser, but I'm getting a bit disgusted with what he <u>has been</u> doing. But even on his good days, Parker to JDM is candy to a seven course meal.

The Armchair Detective (book and TV reviews, interviews, etc.) is $20/yr., and published quarterly. I am happily renewing it.

I want to thank JDM for Meyer and McGee. My father fractured his skull in June, and the coma, ICU, and hospital rehab took my summer and numbed me. During that time, just touching a McGee/Meyer book was comforting--like being surrounded by friends. I am grateful.

VALERIE McCAFFREY, Hinsdale, IL: Did you know that JDM and I have the same birthday? Next week (July 24) he's 69. I'll admit to being younger, but I won't say how much. (Val also sent a piece from the N.Y. TIMES on what vacationing executives were reading. Only one had SILVER RAIN on his list--the most popular novel was THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER, by Tom Clancy. Val also sent a favorable review of the movie version of A FLASH OF GREEN in the Chicago TRIBUNE for June 20, 1985. Have any of you seen it yet? Regrettably, it has not come anywhere near Tampa, and we'd like to know why. Apparently distribution has been spotty, but it's been well received wherever it's been shown.--Ed.)

JEAN MONETTE, Ottawa, Ontario: I include a new postal money order to replace the stale dated one which you returned. I have kept the amount at $80.00.

I am sorry to have contributed to the misunderstanding. When I received your note of 9 Jan., I did not reply because you only seemed to want a reply if there had been a mistake and I wanted a refund. Had I replied then, your deposit would have been on time.

To be perfectly honest, I had made a mistake and had only intended to send $8.00 (a little extra for postage to Canada). But I also remembered some fine service you had rendered me in the past--special handling and letters for previous cheques, sending me an extra copy of a Bibliophile that had been lost in the mail and finally notifying me of the extra amount. I have never had such good service on any subscription therefore I decided to leave it as a contribution.

(We're glad somebody loves us. The stirring story on this is that when we received an $80 money order from Jean Monette in payment of a one-year subscription we went into a mild tizzy and worried for weeks about whether to cash it or send it back, since it was probably a mistake--which as you see from the above, it was. Communication languished between us, and by the time I had assurance to go ahead and deposit it, it had become too old--stale-dated, as the banks say. Re-submitting the $80 intact was a gesture of true love, and we appreciate it deeply--and needless to say, Jean Monette has a lifetime subscription to JDMB.--Ed.)

JIM NEAL, San Diego, Ca: (Along with another favorable review of A FLASH OF GREEN, from the San Diego UNION): The review got a surprising amount of space. On the other side of the page, under the headline "Films in Focus," the movie has a four-star rating--tops.

THEODORE S. ORME, Silver Spring, MD: I am attaching my check for $25.00 to cover two years subscription to JDMB, and with a bit left over for your "emergency" kitty--just as a note of my appreciation for the fun I have gotten out of each volume of the JDMB.

Ever since first reading (maybe six or seven times ago) THE GIRL THE GOLD WATCH AND EVERYTHING I have daydreamed myself to sleep most nights thinking what I would do if I had that watch--try it some time, it's fun!

Lately I have been amusing myself by mentally composing what might have happened to Bonny Lee and Kirby during the last twenty years, and how were they now and where. ---Just an idea: Bonny Lee has produced nine children for their family, and adopted another dozen! And so forth--it also is fun.

If you think that you or your readers might be amused, let me know, as I can cover the story in just three or four paragraphs. I would love to do it!

Provided, however, that you promise to severely edit my copy, as at age 75 I have given up trying to learn how to spell, or even type decently. (Our readers will be amused, so go for it. We'll do all the editing you need.--Ed.)

DON SANDSTROM, Indianapolis, IN: I have been hooked on (and by) JDM since 1951 but it wasn't until three months ago I ran across a notice for the BIB. You either had a faint light or a leak-proof bushel. Thanks for the six copies (1983-85) you just sent, although I was distressed to learn from them that the 44 novels, 21 TMs and six anthologies I have leave me about five short--a shortage I'm already working on. (Don enclosed a copy of the April issue of the Waldenbooks Newsletter, CRIME TIMES, featuring an interview with JDM. One thing that intrigued us was his inclusion of SLAM THE BIG DOOR among his three previous books that he liked best--the other two were A KEY TO THE SUITE and THE END OF THE NIGHT.--Ed.)

STEVEN RICHARDSON: I loved LONELY SILVER RAIN--probably my favorite JDM in the '80's, so far. My only fear is that Jean may be killed off--females close to Trav are always in danger! '85 must be my lucky year--I found WEEP FOR ME in a Tucson bookshop! I also found a paperback, TWO (Carroll & Graf, 1983) with two of JDM's short stories, "Long Shot" and "Jail Bait." This was new to me--has it been mentioned in JDMB? (It seems to us that the Shines wrote something about this, but we can't find the reference. Help, anyone?---Ed.)

STEPHEN SCHWANDT, Minneapolis, MN: Though I have been both a JDM and JDM BIBLIOPHILE reader for years, I was especially impressed by the variety and scope of the articles in issue #36. The BIBLIOPHILE not only did an excellent job of lionizing a writer who deserves all of the attention he gets, but also was generous in sharing JDM's insightful and practical advice to aspiring writers.

As an aspiring writer myself (see enclosure for info on my first published novel, a mystery) and as a teacher of writing (you may remember having been contacted by one of my former students, Dawn Parsell, who did a paper on JDM's reclusiveness that you mentioned in the BIBLIOPHILE and that JDM read) . . . let's see, how did this sentence begin? . . . oh yes, as an aspiring writer and teacher of writing, I've found plenty of use for many of your articles and all of JDM's advisory comments. Thanks for a most provocative and professional effort. (Mr. Schwandt's new book is titled THE LAST GOODIE and is a mystery story for young adults published by Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 385 Madison Ave., New York 10017.--Ed.)

WILLIAM A. SMITH, Jr.: Enjoyed your book immensely, as I have the JDMB. I am sorry I was so recently introduced to this elite society. For many years I thought I was probably the only person who insisted on finding <u>all</u> of JDM's paperbacks. Since THE GOOD OLD STUFF, of course, I know I'll never succeed in reading <u>all</u> of the stories, but it did present a new challenge.

LEE SONDERUP, Eagan, MN: Add another to your list of people who found out about the JDM Bibliophile from Jim Fuller's article in the Minneapolis STAR and TRIBUNE.

I started reading JDM's Travis McGee books when I was in college in the mid '60's. I can recall spending my study time reading Travis McGee instead of my textbooks. I managed to graduate inspite of these bad habits.

Enclosed is a xerox copy of the cover of a used paperback I recently found at a used book store. As you can see this is a "Lew Archer" book but there's a difference. This book is shown to be written by John MacDonald (not John D. MacDonald). Unless I'm mistaken this is a mistake. Ross MacDonald is obviously the author of the "Lew Archer" series. This is a Pocket Book, the book published in its 3rd printing in August 1959. Are you aware of any other similar errors? Have other people come across other books with this same mistake? Any thoughts or ideas? Is it worth anything?

My only other thoughts or questions relate to efforts made to turn Travis McGee books into movies. I'm aware of the DARKER THAN AMBER movie and the Sam Elliott TV movie. What has the problem been? Difficulty in finding the right actors for Travis McGee? lack of interest in Hollywood? Considering what Hollywood does to books maybe it's best they don't make any Travis McGee movies.

I can recall what they did several years ago with a Martin Beck book--THE LAUGHING POLICEMAN (by Sjowall and Wahloo)--they took it out of Stockholm, Sweden, where it belonged and put it in San Francisco --it was not a good movie! (For more on the JDM-Ross Macdonald confusion, see the piece on that subject by JDM in JDMB #36, the July, 1985, issue.--Ed.)

JOHN W. WATSON, Carlsbad, CA: What is the reason why such titles as WEEP FOR ME, I COULD GO ON SINGING and THE LETHAL SEX are now out of print and unavailable? I assume JDM doesn't want them reissued, but I'm not clear exactly why. . . . Also, what is the latest status on the new version of THE HOUSE GUESTS? (JDM has never thought that either WEEP FOR ME or I COULD GO ON SINGING is up to the standard of the rest of his work, and has therefore asked his publishers not to reissue them; they have respected his wishes. THE LETHAL SEX is an anthology of mystery stories by women, with a short Introduction by JDM, so is not properly a part of the canon. THE HOUSE GUESTS was recently issued in paperback under the Fawcett imprint and is available in book-stores.--Ed.)

RAMONA WEEKS, Phoenix, AZ: The English Department at San Jose State University (CA.) sponsored, in 1983, the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, "an unorthodox literary competition that asked its entrants to compose the opening sentence to the worst of all possible novels." There were more than 10,000 entries from the U.S. and nearly 50 foreign countries.

Edward George Earle Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873) was a prolific Victorian novelist, "an inspiration to generations of untalented writers," among whom is Snoopy of the PEANUTS cartoon strip. Snoopy is always commencing his novel with the opening line of Bulwer-Lytton's book, PAUL CLIFFORD (1830): "It was a dark and stormy night."

The best (?) of the B-L contest were compiled in a Viking Penguin paperback ($4.95) by Scott Rice. Although not the winner, one of the selections in the book, in a section called "H. Caliber, Investigation," is a takeoff on a Travis McGee novel. The work of Thomas Whisen of Dayton, Ohio, it goes like this:

I had just docked the Four Flusher at the marina in Saint Pete when this frosty, washed-out blonde came waltzing down the dock, batted her mink eyelashes demurely, and told me she was desperately in need of my services.

Oh, yes. The title of Scott Rice's book is IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT. (©1984, Viking-Penguin Inc.)

I have no idea which McGee novel is being parodied. The contest was staged again in 1984; I suspect there will be a complete run of books containing "worst opening sentences" as the B-L contest continues, year after year.

JDM Bibliophile
Dept. of English
USF
Tampa, FL 33620

Non Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 257
Tampa, Florida

Judith Lucero Turchin
1140 Hyde St
San Francisco CA 94109